No. 305 / SEPTEMBER 1998

THE NI
NEW INTERNATIONALIST

Migration

Checkmate – Indonesia's social control

Canada's cracked mosaic

Shattered dreams: African journeys

Maps & myths

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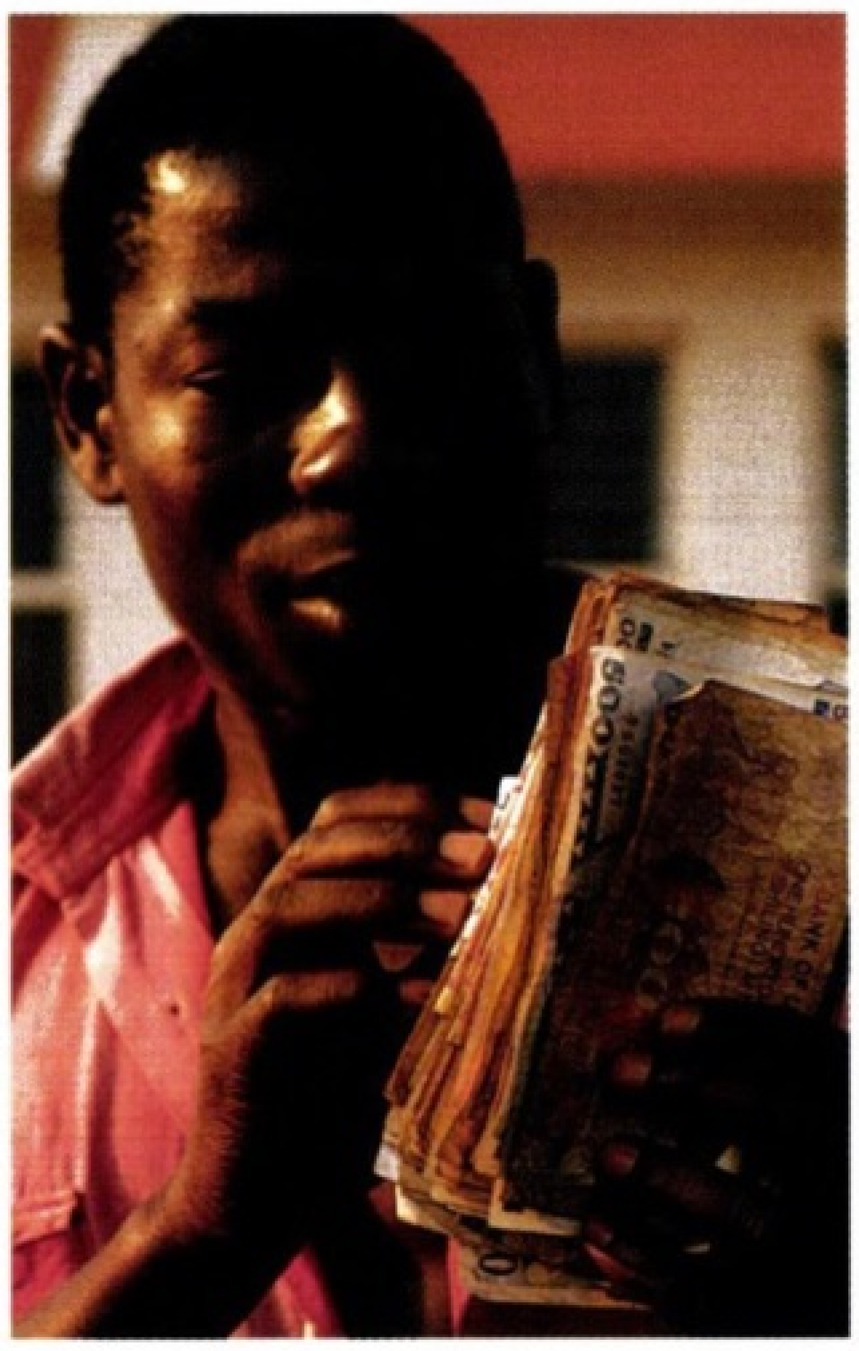
◆

THE PEOPLE, THE IDEAS, THE ACTION IN THE FIGHT FOR WORLD DEVELOPMENT

COMING NEXT MONTH

Money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- **The power of secrecy** Eduardo Galeano on the cosy affair between bankers and dictators.
- **Miracle to meltdown** a personal anatomy of the Asian crisis.
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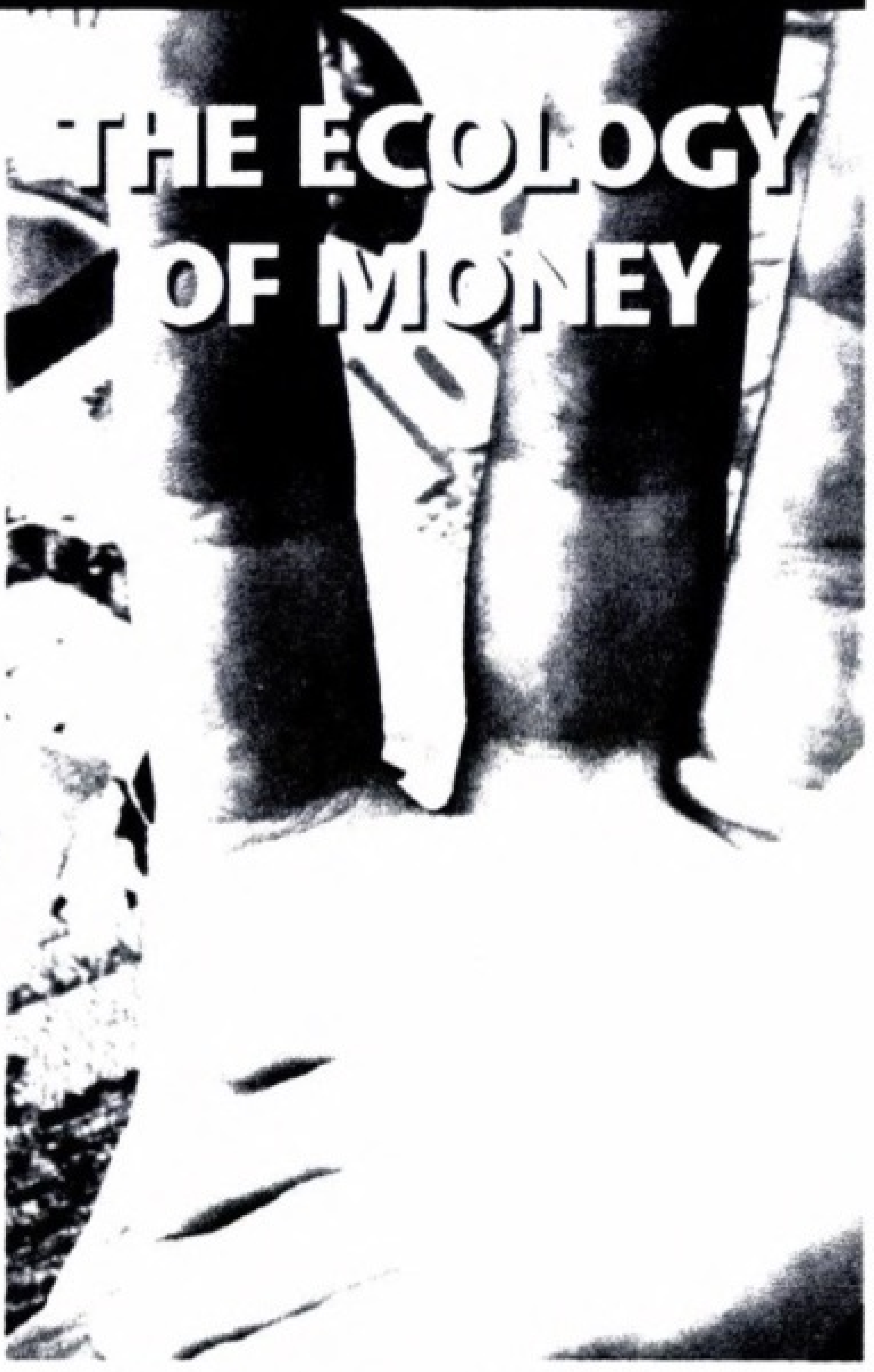

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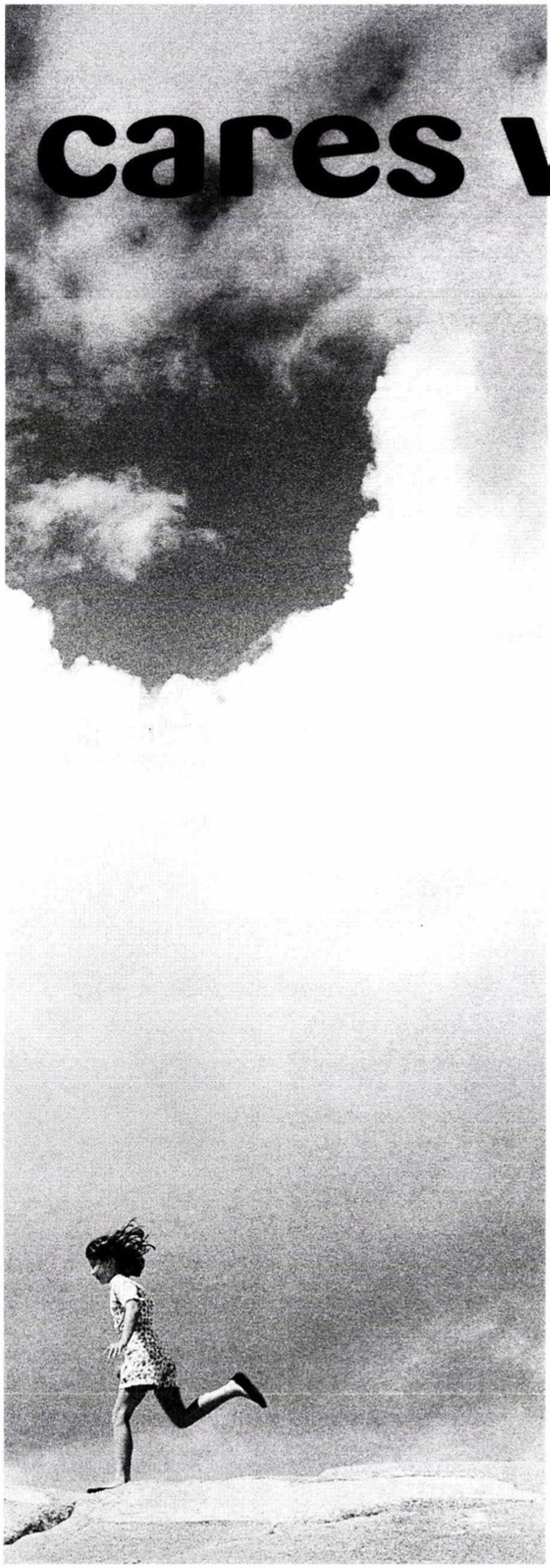
Who cares wins.



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STOP THE NAZIS!
STOP THE RACISTS!
By any means necessary
TUC MARCH
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unite against racism

PHILIP WOLMUTH / PANOS PICTURES

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FRONT COVER PHOTO BY **STEPHEN DUPONT / PANOS PICTURES**.
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THIS MONTH'S **THEME**

Migration

FROM THIS MONTH'S **EDITOR**

'FRENCH, Australians, we don't want any of them: we just don't want to be overwhelmed.' said 'John', an active member of the right-wing, racist British National Party.

Well sorry John but here I am, an Australian with a French name, in Britain. And frankly, I'm finding the whole experience...well...overwhelming.

When I arrived last year, it was six in the morning and I was a little nervous about meeting David Ransom, my fellow-editor. I wandered amongst the throngs of travellers at Heathrow trying to find him. More than once I tapped on the back of some David-like person, only to find a flustered stranger. Meanwhile, David searched for me, hoping the task would be easy with the description he was given: 'Brainy-looking with curly hair'. He no doubt discovered there are many intelligent-looking people out there with wild locks.

Finally we met, after I taped a desperate plea for help onto my suitcase. The long search had worn down my apprehension and we hugged like old friends.

A week later, Princess Diana died. The country reeled and the media reported this was 'an outpouring of British sentiment'. I watched the television, speechless at the sight of millions of people standing for hours on the sides of freeways to catch a glimpse of her hearse, but then I heard something really astounding. Someone commented that Prince Charles' 'callousness' in the aftermath of Diana's death was not surprising – given that his father was Greek.

Diana was the true 'English rose' deserving of the viewer's sympathy. Charles was the distant son of an immigrant. This sudden revelation of prejudice was like the Australian sun in my face – blinding but frighteningly familiar.

I also experienced this in my search for photos for this magazine. It was rare to find images of people of different colours living, working and celebrating *together*. And the lines of intolerance are drawn in nationality. Irish migrants are 50 per cent more likely than the British-born to commit suicide and are the only immigrant group whose life expectancy declines after arrival in Britain.

Migration highlights a country's strengths and challenges its failings. For the migrant, it allows them to step back from their life, to view it from afar. As my head spun in the airport I asked myself (not for the last time): 'What the hell am I doing here?'

The British and Australians are not as similar as you might imagine. My phrases, jokes and history need explaining to 'the Brits' while their mannerisms and accents are a bit wacky to me as an 'Aussie'.

Beyond all this, there is an incredible learning curve as people cross the psychological borders which divide them and develop mutual understanding. And this common ground is the most exciting place I've visited yet.

Anouk Ride

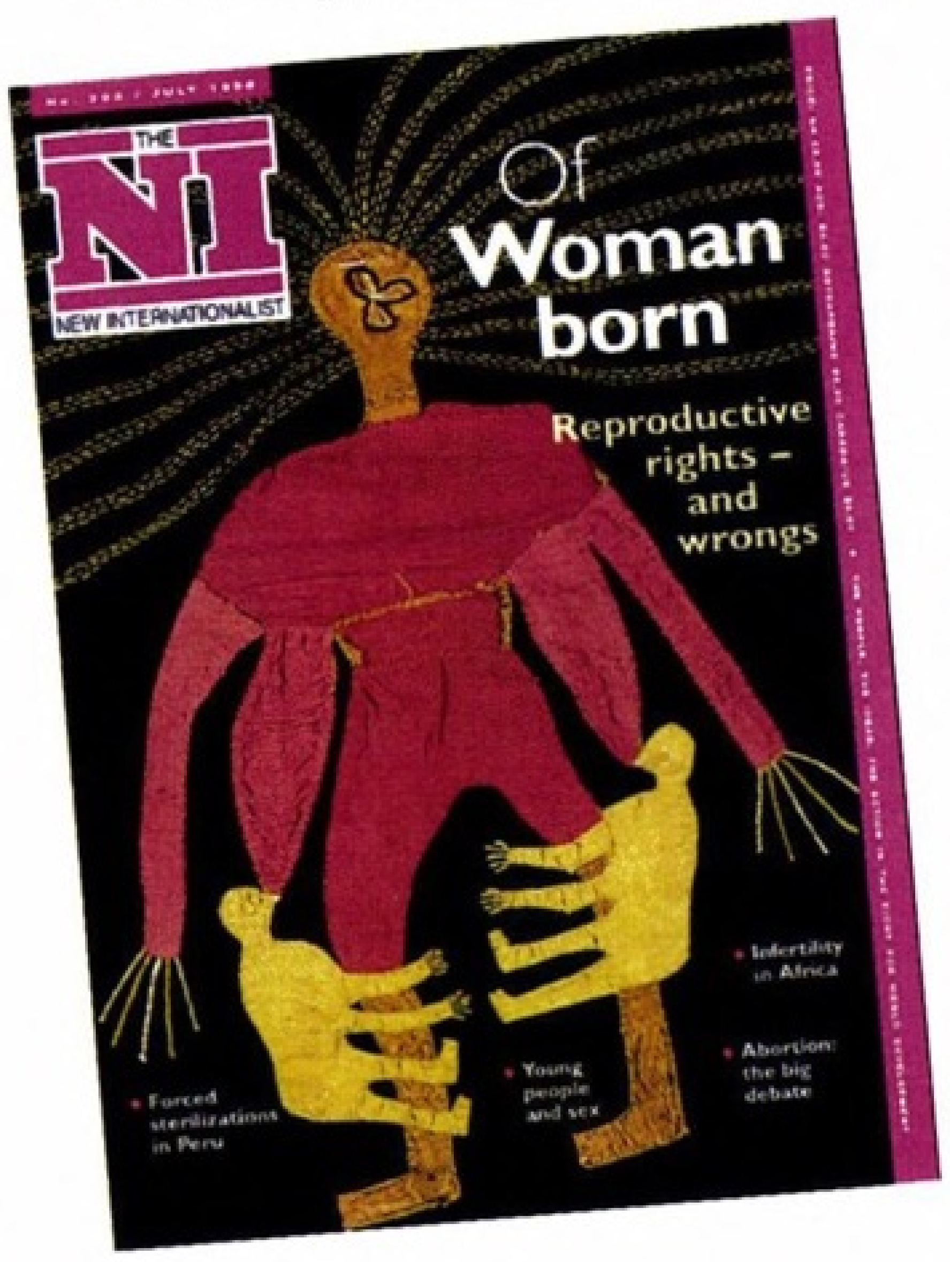
Anouk Ride
for the ***New Internationalist*** *Co-operative*

Letters

The New Internationalist welcomes your letters. But please keep them short. They may be edited for purposes of space or clarity. Include a home telephone number if possible and send your letters to the nearest editorial office. The address and e-mail are inside the front cover.

Natural methods

I am sorry to see that you suffer from misinformation about Natural Family Planning (*Of Woman Born* **NI 303**). You confuse withdrawal (dear to teenagers) with the Rhythm Method (abstinence based on calendar calculations). The only thing these methods of contraception have in common is that they don't work much better than no precautions at all.



On the other hand, Natural Family Planning, given a success rate of 98 per cent, is comparable with oral hormones. Because it relies on intelligence, correct information and co-operation; because it won't make anyone rich and gives power only to its users, it may seem an idealistic method. But by your dismissive approach you may have put off a number of individuals. To redress the balance I suggest that interested readers look at *A Method of Natural Family Planning* by Anna Flynn and Melissa Brooks.

Deborah Sutcliffe
Hornsea, England

Erratum: On page 30 of **NI 303** the title of the International Planned Parenthood Federation was given incorrectly.

Missing Tibet

How disappointing to read in Howard Davies' report on the plight of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal (*NI Interview* **NI 302**) that the Buddhist nation of Bhutan 'is sandwiched between China, India and Nepal'. Surely Mr Davies has heard of a country the size of Western Europe called Tibet, a country which I believe borders Bhutan, a country from which hundreds of thousands of refugees, myself included, have fled Chinese oppression. If people continue to remove Tibet from the world's maps then China will have succeeded in its obliteration of a nation. If publications such as **NI** collude in this, what hope is there for us six million surviving Tibetans?

Sonam Choephel
Clitheroe, England

Editor: We apologize for not including Tibet in the list of countries bordering Bhutan, which was not intended in any way to denigrate the struggle of the Tibetans.

Jeans junk

Why is **NI** so hard-pressed for suitable world issues that it ended up choosing an inconsequential topic like 'jeans' (**NI 302**)?

The underlying message to us readers is that nuclear proliferation, genocide, human-rights violations in Turkey, the Balkans and elsewhere, as well as the growing gulf between North and South are subsidiary issues to the nitty-gritty of jeans manufacture.

Anthony Grivas
New York, US

Malaysian migrants

In your *Update* (**NI 302**) on the 'plight' of migrant workers in Malaysia you imply that Malaysians are treating these people unfairly. Please be reminded that the loss of employment is now a pervasive problem in South-East Asia and is suffered by workers in all sectors – not exclusively the migrant ones.

Secondly, your quote on the wages of workers is misleading and does not warrant comparison with American or European wages since the standard of living is very much lower. The labourers are paid decently by local standards and certainly at least five times higher than what they would earn in their home countries.

Lastly you fail to include in your report that boatloads of up to 1,000 illegal immigrants are arriving daily. Crime rates are rising and illegal squatter areas mushroom across the country. We have no resources to cope with these people and the additional problems they represent.

Yap Mun Ching
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Throwing stones

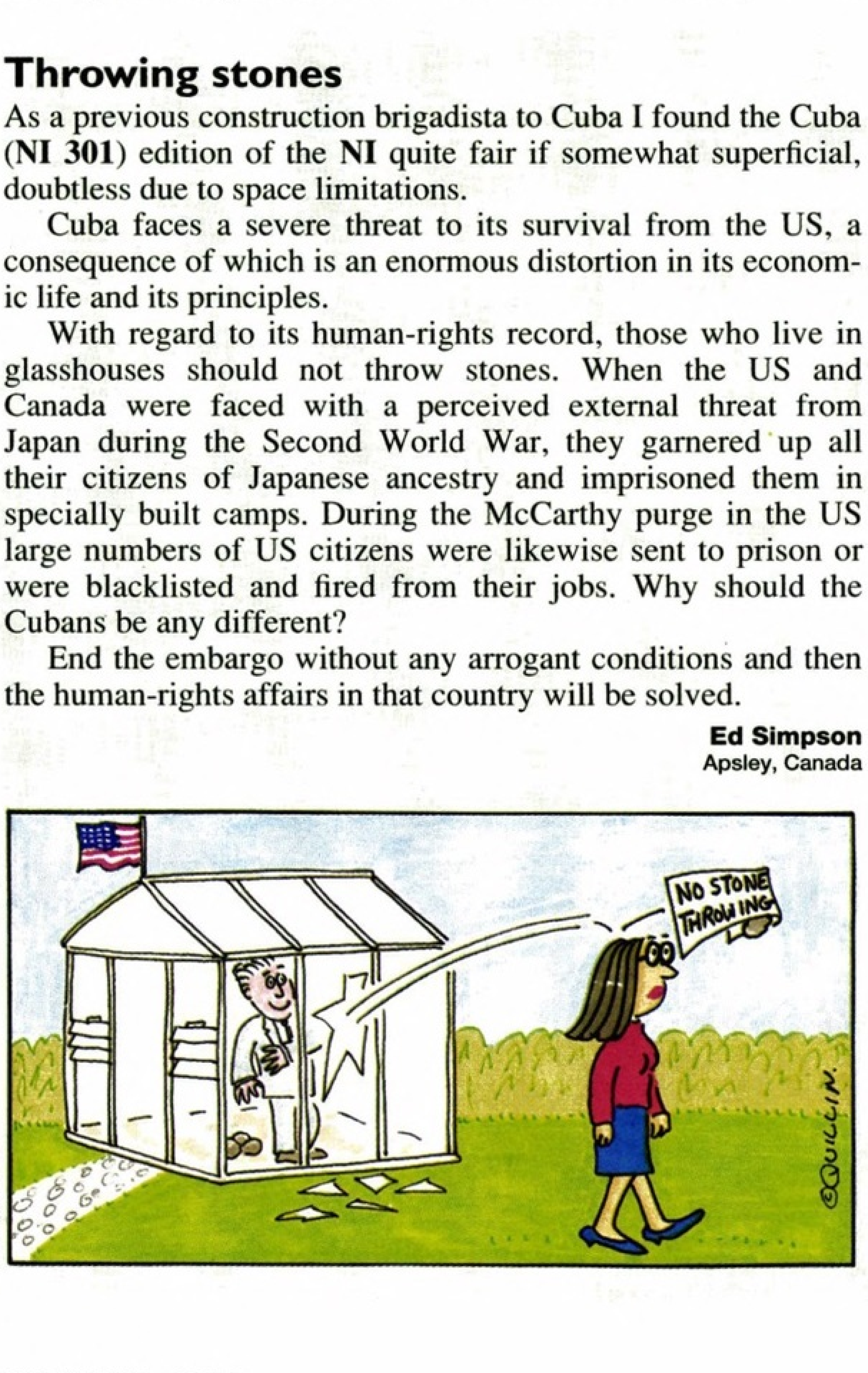
As a previous construction brigadista to Cuba I found the Cuba (**NI 301**) edition of the **NI** quite fair if somewhat superficial, doubtless due to space limitations.

Cuba faces a severe threat to its survival from the US, a consequence of which is an enormous distortion in its economic life and its principles.

With regard to its human-rights record, those who live in glasshouses should not throw stones. When the US and Canada were faced with a perceived external threat from Japan during the Second World War, they garnered up all their citizens of Japanese ancestry and imprisoned them in specially built camps. During the McCarthy purge in the US large numbers of US citizens were likewise sent to prison or were blacklisted and fired from their jobs. Why should the Cubans be any different?

End the embargo without any arrogant conditions and then the human-rights affairs in that country will be solved.

Ed Simpson
Apsley, Canada



South African fraud

While I agree with Lara Hearn's complaint on the letters page (**NI 302**) about New Zealand being placed below South Africa in relation to indigenous peoples, I would warn against any comparisons with South Africa that fail to mention the enormous historical and racial fraud on which that country is still based.

White wealth and black poverty are still based not only on white conquest, but on the their spurious 'history' of South Africa's settlement, which for decades falsely claimed that blacks and whites arrived 'simultaneously' and the blacks only settled 14 per cent of the country and almost none of the mineral-rich areas.

In truth, the blacks settled more than 50 per cent of the land before the whites arrived, including nearly all the mineral wealth. This fraud, coupled with apartheid's racist land laws, enabled the whites to 'rip off' some three billion rand annually for at least 40 years; a point largely ignored even today, when 'Reconciliation' fails to include fair reparations.

John Clarke
Denham, England

Just deserts?

Your book reviewer (**NI 300**) is disappointed that a history of Canada's native peoples opens with a 'regurgitation of the

Bering Strait Land-bridge Theory', which he/she believes has been created by Canadians who can't deal with the reality of the aboriginals having been there, literally, forever.

The theory is not a myth generated by guilty European-Canadians but science's best guess (based on evidence) at how humans came to populate the American continent. Your reviewer seems to believe that if the native people have existed there eternally then they deserve something better than the appalling injustices perpetrated on them by Europeans. But if they themselves are mere migrants from 'somewhere back in Siberia' then they got their just deserts.

Presumably then, by this logic, we now all have to pretend that any indigenous group who have suffered genocide at the hands of new colonists had been in residence since before the big bang.

The immorality of the treatment of native Canadians by Europeans is not a function of the length of native residence, but of their very existence as people and as a people. No-one deserves to be treated in this way. We are all migrants.

Paul Doyle
Rockhampton, Australia

Road Rage

Your website address for Road Rage (**NI 301** page 33) is incorrect. It should be: <www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/ef/rr/index.html>

Roy Bishop
Sydney, Australia

TOPIC TIME

We are holding our annual meeting to decide on topics for next year's issues. If you have ideas that you would like to send in, please send in a paragraph (not one line and not three pages!) on each proposal to Nikki van der Gaag in Oxford by October 15th. You can post it or e-mail me on nikkivdg@newint.org

The views expressed on the letters page are not necessarily those of the New Internationalist.

Letter from Mongolia

Journey to the end of the earth

Louisa Waugh takes off for Tsengel, a village at the far western end of Mongolia.

MY FRIEND, Sodnem, whose post-box I share, was on the phone.

'There's a letter for you from someone called Abbai who lives in Tsengel village in Bayan-Olgii. It says they do want an English teacher. What's it all about?'

I stiffened. 'Oh God,' I thought. 'Now I have to go!'

For the previous eight months I had talked almost incessantly to friends and colleagues about going to live in the Mongolian countryside. I'd made and changed plans, switched my choice of landscape (Mongolia has desert, mountains and steppe) and my earnest ramblings had gradually become a standing joke.

The problem was Tsengel village was about as hidden and rural as you can get. Bayan-Olgii, Mongolia's most western province, is popularly known as the Tibet of Mongolia. Its stark, fierce mountains and treeless valleys are home to Mongolian minorities – Kazakh herders and Tuvans from the nearby central Asian republic. Tsengel, population 3,500, and more than 2,000 kilometres from Ulaanbaatar, is Mongolia's furthest-west village.

After a sleepless night sitting up persuading myself how wonderful it all would be, my friend Chimgee and I rang Abbai to verify my arrival a month later. The crackling connection took 45 minutes to secure, only confirming my view that I had booked myself into a place at the end of the world.

Abbai, Tsengel's governor, said the local school director was already drawing up the schedule for my four-month visit. The panic started. I began to shop for a siege – buying coffee, canned fish, pasta and tomato paste in bulk – trying to wind up my journalism and eating as much good food as I could in preparation for several months of noodles and boiled meat.

And then just two weeks before my scheduled takeoff, I fell in love.

I didn't move to Mongolia to meet an Englishman, but Gulliver, a shy gentle musician, captivated me. Whilst I nervously tore around saying goodbye to my friends and panicking over what I hadn't done, we spent every spare moment wrapped around each other ignoring my imminent departure. I looked around at Ulaanbaatar's rubble-strewn streets and tiny candlelit kiosks and felt sick with nerves. I knew this city with its dodgy heating system and power cuts. Tsengel had four hours of electricity a day (usually), one shop and no running water. This was going to be tough.

The evening before I left my friends came round, helped me finish packing and left me laden with books and chocolates. Gulliver and I fell asleep halfway through the night, exhausted by my emotional turmoil. I awoke with a jerk and with a feeling of panic rising in my chest, looked at my clock and swore. It was 6:15 am – in 15 minutes I had to be at the airport 25 kilometres away or risk losing my seat.

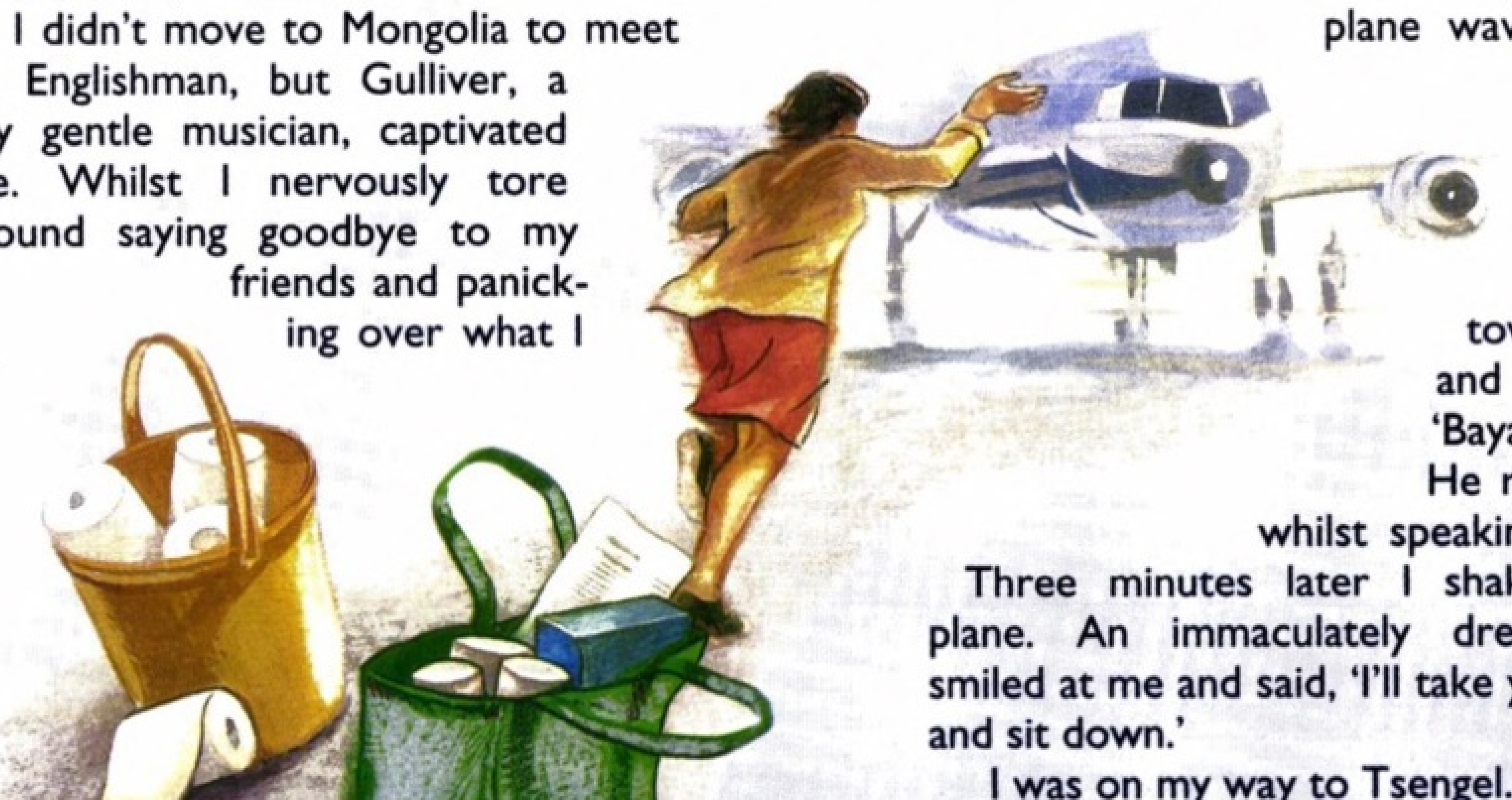
The driver of the first car we hailed tore along the almost empty streets towards the airport and I finally checked in at 7:35. At 8:10, still waiting for the boarding sign, I wandered over to luggage security to have my hand baggage (which included a bucket full of toilet rolls) checked. The officer took my flight bag, frowned and said casually, 'You're very late — the plane has gone.' A terse conversation was barked between officers and we were suddenly herded through several corridors to the departure hall. Another officer glanced at my ticket and shook her head, 'The flight has gone!'

I was shaking my head and weeping. Gulliver speaks no Mongolian and just looked confused. But a well-dressed Mongolian tapped me on the shoulder, 'The plane is going, but if you run fast you can catch it.' I momentarily threw my arms around Gulliver's neck, and then I ran out onto the tarmac. A woman was gesturing frantically to me and pointing to the plane being towed toward the runway. 'Run, run!'

After 100 meters I abandoned my bags and ran blindly towards the plane waving my arms. A figure appeared brandishing a walkie-talkie. We scurried towards each other and I gibbered, 'Bayan-Olgii.'

He retrieved my bags whilst speaking into his radio. Three minutes later I shakily boarded the plane. An immaculately dressed stewardess smiled at me and said, 'I'll take your bags. You go and sit down.'

I was on my way to Tsengel. ■



SARAH JOHN

Louisa Waugh is a freelance writer who lives and works in Mongolia.

Update

WESTERN SAHARA

Skulduggery

Morocco puts referendum at risk

THE fate of Western Sahara is still uncertain as Morocco continues to obstruct a free and fair referendum to determine the future of its Saharawi inhabitants. The Saharawis, most of whom live in refugee camps in a bleak corner of the Algerian desert, have been fighting for a referendum ever since Morocco invaded the former Spanish Sahara 23 years ago (see *Desert Dawn*, **NI 297**).

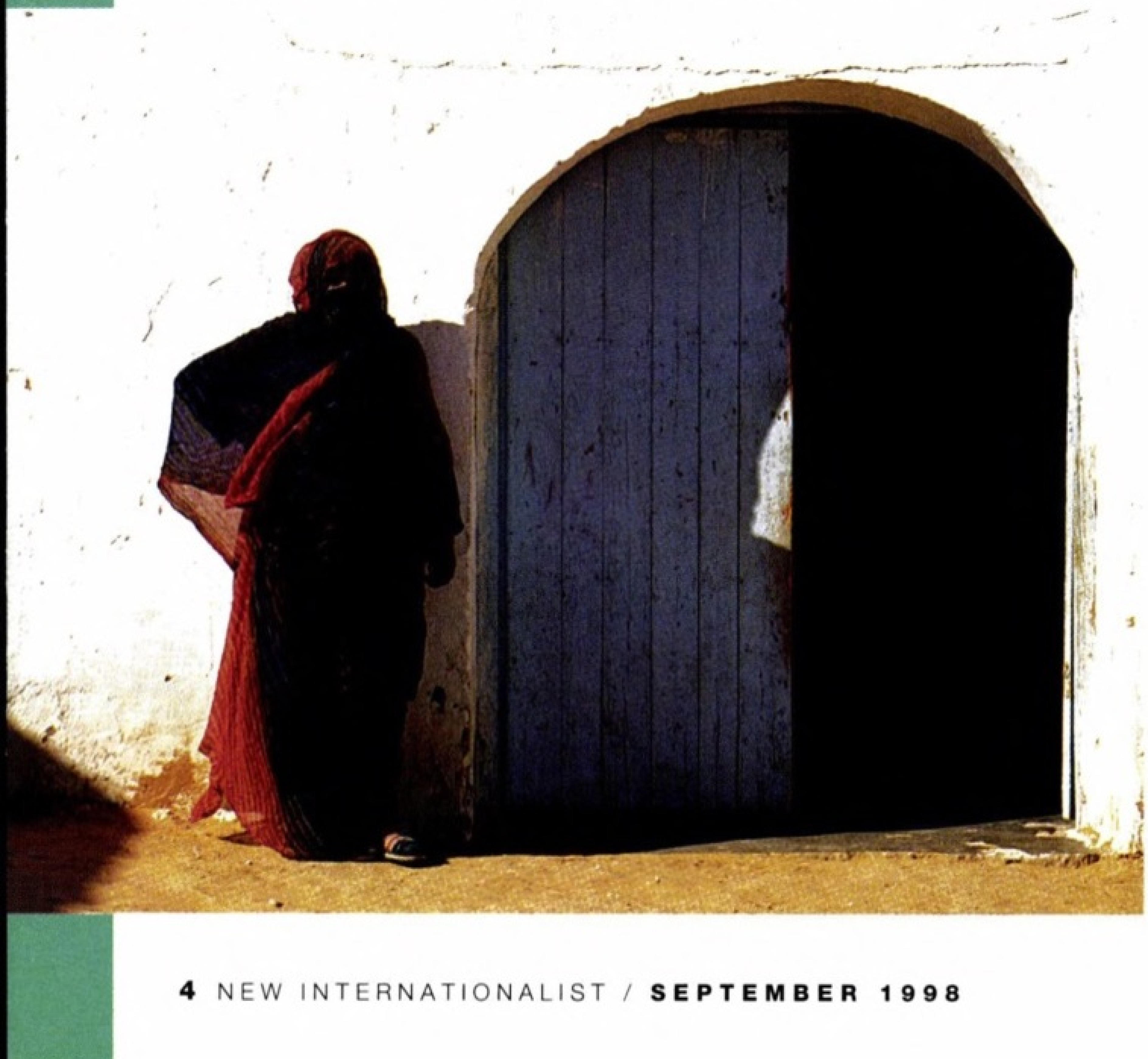
In 1991 a UN peace plan brought about a ceasefire in the 16-year war between Morocco and the Saharawi liberation movement, the Polisario Front. The ceasefire has held but a referendum initially scheduled for 1992 has never taken place. Morocco has attempted over the years to stack the voter list with people whom it claims are of Saharawi origin but who would vote for integration rather than independence; Polisario wishes the electoral roll to be as close as possible to the last census, conducted by the Spanish in 1974. The UN operation, MINURSO, has proved utterly unable to assert its authority.

In 1997 the new UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan persuaded the US to support another initiative and former US Secretary of State James Baker forced Morocco into direct talks with Polisario for the first time. The result was a signed agreement in Houston which set the terms of voter identification, prisoner release and return of refugees. The referendum date was set for 7 December 1998.

By mid-June, 127,472 individuals had been identified by the UN as legitimate voters. But the UN Secretary-General reported to the Security Council that the process was being seriously hampered by Morocco's insistence that an extra 12,000 individuals be accepted as voters without their being presented to the UN Identification Commission in the normal way. Kofi Annan continued: 'I must express concern about the continuing propaganda against MINURSO in the Moroccan press, which is clearly unjustifiable and should be halted.'

In addition an incriminating letter from Moroccan Interior Minister Driss Basri, written on 22 January 1998, has now been made public. It advised Moroccan local-government officials on how to coach individuals to persuade the UN Identification Commission that they are Saharawi. The letter stated that the results of identification have 'so far fallen far short of the necessary level' partly due 'to the manifestly insufficient preparation of our applicants'.

ALL PHOTOS: JULIO ETCHART / STILL PICTURES



Playtime – peace negotiations for Western Sahara go around in circles.

Basri says: 'there is a need to inculcate the applicant with a psychological stance' enabling them to persuade the identification operation and the MINURSO commission that they are really Saharawi. He adds that applicants should 'learn in advance, from applicants already identified as belonging to the same sub-fraction [a particular part of a Saharawi tribe, with its own customs], what questions the Identification Commission is asking'.

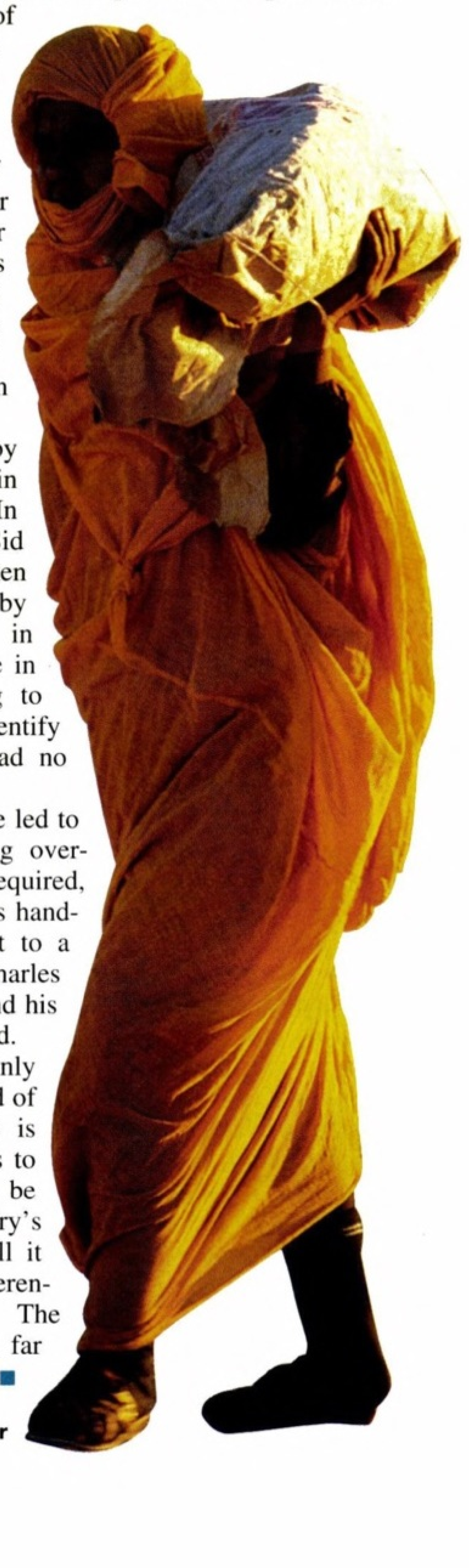
'Full mastery of these elements,' continues Basri, 'implies preliminary training of the applicant in his prefecture or province of origin and two or three days of fine tuning with the Moroccan Chioukh before the identification session.'

Under the Houston Agreements any sponsoring of Saharawi individuals by either side is forbidden, as is the prior meeting of individual applicants with the *chioukhs* (tribal elders) who help the UN Identification Commission assess applicants' knowledge of Saharawi tradition and cultural heritage.

Harassment of Saharawis by the Moroccan authorities in Western Sahara continues. In January, a Saharawi Chioukh, Sid Amed Mustafa Aaraua, was taken to the Moroccan capital Rabat by the authorities and died in unexplained circumstances while in custody. He had been refusing to accede to demands that he identify individuals as Saharawi who had no sound basis to their claims.

The continuing problems have led to speculation that another meeting overseen by James Baker will be required, possibly in September. Baker has handed over day-to-day involvement to a new Special Representative, Charles Dunbar, but retains an interest and his extra authority may still be needed.

The referendum will certainly not now take place before the end of 1998 but international pressure is vital over the weeks and months to come if a return to war is to be avoided. Please urge your country's foreign–affairs ministry to do all it can to ensure a free and fair referendum in Western Sahara. The Saharawis have already waited far too long. ■



Chris Brazier

CORPORATIONS

Just eat it

Free speech swallowed by companies

In the driver's seat – corporations create their own laws.

DANIEL DANCER / STILL PICTURES

AGRIBUSINESS is pressing for new US laws to deter activists and journalists from criticizing corporate practice. 'Food Disparagement' laws are currently being made in 13 states with pressure mounting for similar laws in 20 more.

The Animal Industry Foundation, whose funding is from the industry, distributes its 'model food disparagement statute' to legislators across the US. In a country which hails itself as home to free expression, the laws allow the food industry to collect damages arising out of critical reports on the safety of food products.

Food disparagement laws are unusual for the US as they shift the burden of proof from the plaintiff to the defendant. But many believe corporations do not want to file numerous lawsuits. They are wary of providing publicity to food activists such as that given to the so-called 'McLibel activists' who were sued in Britain for criticizing the fast-food chain McDonalds. Food companies seem to want to use the threat of lawsuits and their costs to tame journalists and activists. But companies understand that if a case ever goes to trial and makes it to the Appeal Courts in the US, it is likely to be declared unconstitutional.

The food-safety organization, Food and Water, started a campaign to stop the construction of an irradiation plant in Hawaii. A letter was sent from the industry's United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association (UFFVA) warning Food and Water to 'cease and desist' from criticizing irradiation.

US companies have managed to prevent mandatory labelling of genetically engineered food and now may prevent criticism of their products. Executive Director of Food and Water, Michael Colby, says: 'The food industry has effectively bought these disparagement laws from politicians so that citizens concerned with issues such as irradiation, toxic pesticides, or food biotechnology will think twice before speaking out about the devastating impact such technologies have on the planet and its inhabitants.' ■

Ben Lilliston and Ronnie Cummins/Third World Network Features

Jailed – Mexican women get longer sentences.

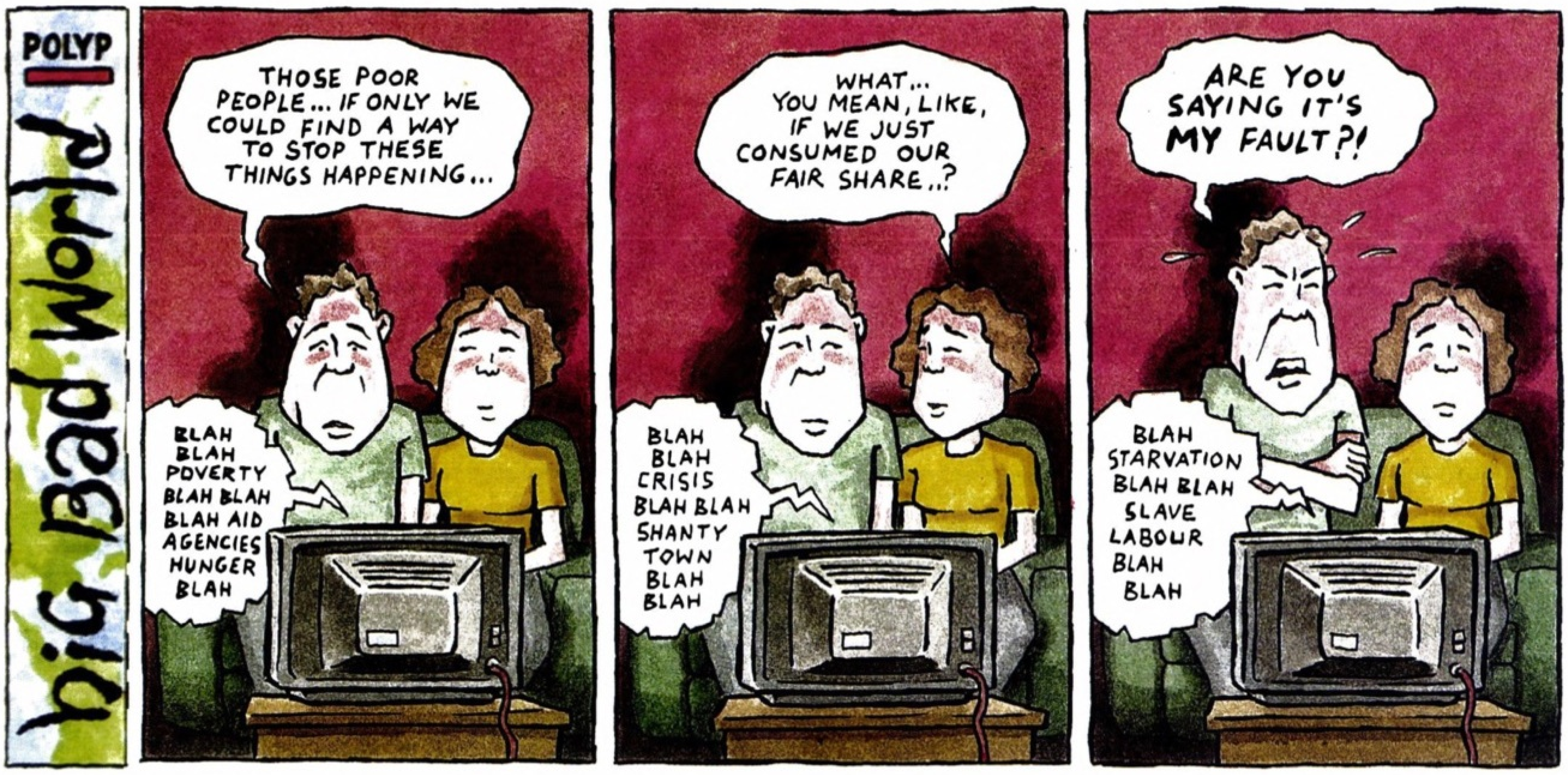
BILL STEPHENSON / PANOS PICTURES

Double jeopardy

Violence against women is increasing the numbers of women in prison in Mexico. About 500 of the 4,000 women in Mexican prisons are charged with homicide. About a quarter of these are locked up for killing husbands, lovers and male assailants who beat and raped them or their children.

Psychologist Elena Azola interviewed 50 women sentenced for murder at Tepepan Women's Reformatory in southern Mexico City. She found 70 per cent of these women had been abused by their partners or fathers. Once arrested, 60 per cent of them were beaten and abused by police. Poor police work means that only 387 arrests were made following nearly 5,000 reported rapes in Mexico City last year. And judges in Mexico give women an average of a third longer sentences than their male counterparts.

John Ross/Gemini News Service


POLYP
big Bad World
THOSE POOR PEOPLE... IF ONLY WE COULD FIND A WAY TO STOP THESE THINGS HAPPENING...
BLAH BLAH POVERTY BLAH BLAH BLAH AID AGENCIES HUNGER BLAH
WHAT... YOU MEAN, LIKE, IF WE JUST CONSUMED OUR FAIR SHARE..?
BLAH BLAH CRISIS BLAH BLAH SHANTY TOWN BLAH BLAH
ARE YOU SAYING IT'S MY FAULT?!
BLAH STARVATION BLAH BLAH SLAVE LABOUR BLAH BLAH

Update

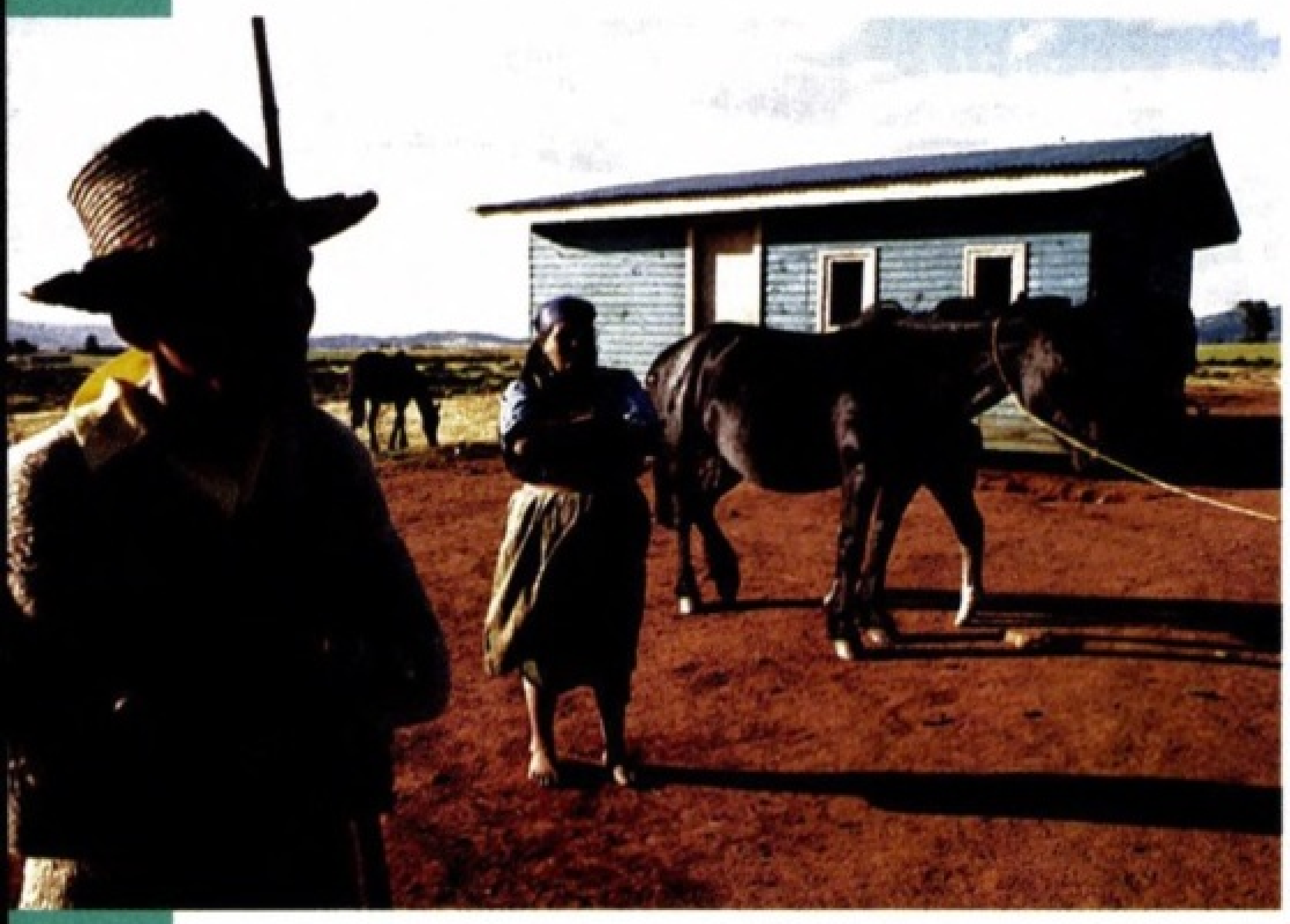
CHILE

Nuptial nightmare

Tension mounts over anti-divorce laws

AFTER 13 years in political exile, Danisa Chelen returned to Chile for a new start. But the country's ban on divorce thwarted her plans. Chelen planned to start a company with her sister but the authorities required her husband's signature. She went to open a bank account – clerks demanded her spouse's approval. 'We'd been separated for ten years and he was living in Nicaragua. The paperwork was an absolute nightmare. For everything I wanted to do as an independent woman, I needed his authorization. I felt like I was mentally incompetent,' recalls Chelen.

Chelen rounded up four friends and a lawyer who were willing to testify in court that, at the time of her marriage, Chelen was not living at the address listed on her marriage certificate. The marriage was then declared illegal. 'It was really very unpleasant. Normally, I'm not a liar, but it was the only way to get my life back,' says Chelen.


Stand off – divorcees are denied rights.

HEINE PEDERSON / STILL PICTURES

Seventy per cent of the population say they support the right to divorce, but the Catholic Church resists reform. 'They speak against divorce in the schools, on television and from the pulpit,' says social worker Ximena Garcia. She works in Recoleta, a district of Santiago, where families with five or six children live in small shacks. Annulment does not exist there. The lawyer's fees – $1,000 or more – are out of reach of the poor. 'The young people here don't worry about it too much. Couples move in together, break up, then go on to another relationship. It's later on they have problems, because the whole social system is premised on the idea of matrimony,' says Garcia.

Health-insurance companies refuse to cover common-law spouses or illegitimate children. Inheritance laws also require that Chileans leave the majority of their estate to their legal spouse and children.

'There are a lot of schools who won't accept children without seeing the certificates of both a civil and church marriage and the signatures of both parents,' says Garcia.

Last December the Lower House debated and approved the idea of developing a divorce law. The next hurdle – Senate approval – is much more daunting. Nine non-elected Senate positions have been appointed by the military, tipping the balance of power in favour of the right wing and a conservative stance on divorce.

'The real irony is that many parliamentarians themselves are married for the second time,' says Chelen. 'It's all right for them to get out of their marriages, but the general population can't possibly be given permission.' ■

Rhoda Metcalfe/Gemini News.

Timely ban

Just before the anniversary of Princess Diana's death, the British Government has suddenly ratified the international treaty banning landmines that was signed by 132 countries in Ottawa last December.

The British Government had been dragging their heels due to Ministry of Defence pressure to delay the removal of JD233 bombs, which release anti-personnel mines on impact.

Britain has pledged to destroy its stock of one million anti-personnel mines before the year 2000.

Dan Palmer/Gemini News Service

HARMUT SCHWARBACH / STILL PICTURES

Slow progress – the British finally ban landmines.

Slick hair

As he watched on television the rescue of an otter soaked in oil from the Exxon Valdez, American hairdresser Philip McCrory had an idea. If animal fur soaks up oil, could human hair clean up oil spills? He tested it with motor oil and the hair clippings from the floor of his salon. It worked, so McCrory presented the idea to NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. NASA estimates that McCrory's technique costs 50 cents for each litre of spilt oil it cleans up, compared with about $2.50 a litre for conventional techniques such as detergents. And it also gets rid of unwanted hair.

EDWARD PARKER / STILL PICTURES

NASA may replace the chemicals with hair.

New Scientist No 2133

Cut gas, not grass

Gases released when grass is cut or trampled can add significantly to urban air pollution, according to an Australian study. In the city of Melbourne in summer, mowing the grass accounts for up to ten per cent of the hydrocarbons entering the atmosphere which react with other gases to form smog. As much as 50 kilograms of volatile organic compounds, including hydrocarbons, are given off per hectare per year from lawns and pastures. Researcher Ian Galbally says: 'Not cutting grass on smog–alert days won't solve the problem, but when combined with other actions – such as car pooling or riding a bike to work – it will make a difference.'

New Scientist No 2133

Groovy birds

The Lambada, a Brazilian dance tune, has become popular with Vietnamese bird poachers. They have found that the Lambada music puts birds into a trance. Hunters who head for bird sanctuaries carrying cassette–tape players loaded with Lambada tapes can scoop up to 50 birds in one night.

World Press Review Vol 45 No 4

Quote

'Satire died the day they gave Henry Kissinger the Nobel Peace Prize. There were no jokes left after that.'

Tom Lehrer, songwriter,
on the former US Secretary of State.

KC
AUBURN NORTH
Champions

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATED PRESS

Maps, myths, & migrants

Anouk Ride dives through the muddy logic of Australia's swamps and uncovers misers, migrants and what really matters.

THEIR slimy, brown, rotund bodies are covered in ugly knobs. Their googly protruding eyes have a distant, arrogant stare while their large mouths emit annoying croaks that disturb everybody's sleep.

They are the cane toads that live in tropical Australia. They are so large that they can spill over the sides of a grown man's hand. But unwise is the person who picks one up – they are immediately covered in urine or sticky poison. This toxic excretion has been known to kill cats, dogs and small wildlife.

Imported to Queensland to eat bugs found in cane sugar crops, these greedy cane toads soon took advantage of their new environment. They bred rapidly and ventured out from the sugar fields, across to the Northern Territory and down into New South Wales. In their ravenous onslaught, they consumed resources and took over wildlife habitats. They became a nuisance on the roads, leaving a foul stink and slippery patches when squashed flat. The toads forgot their place, as humble bug-eating servants, and invaded swimming pools and ponds in the poshest suburbs.

To outsiders the cane toads are something that makes Queensland unique. To

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATED PRESS

Spotlight on prejudice – Pauline Hanson embraces another anti-immigrant supporter (above). Looking up – kids in Sydney, Australia, where 35 per cent of people are immigrants (previous page).

Queenslanders they are pests.

From the same state that hosted the cane toad came right-wing politician Pauline Hanson. 'Australia is being swamped by Asians,' she said. She believes that migrants are like the cane toads, taking jobs, houses, university places and social services from the locals. Like the cane toad, migrants got out of control and started making unreasonable demands such as equal opportunities and language training. They spread their impact from the bigger cities of Melbourne and Sydney to the country towns.

This argument gave Pauline Hanson 23 per cent of the vote in Queensland and led to the creation of the One Nation Party campaigning against both migrant and Aboriginal rights. Rural and conservative voters seemed to be easily led into blaming minorities for the majority's political and economic mistakes.

Chinese migrants who stowed away on ships to the north of Australia then walked – barefoot on hot sand – for days to the nearest settlement 'made Superman look like a wimp'

Some people were surprised by Hanson's popularity – given that 40 per cent of Australians are migrants or the children of migrants. On the contrary, others felt that considering the country's transformation from an insulated colony of 7 million in 1945 to a nation of 18 million people drawn from 150 nations, what was most astounding was that this kind of rhetoric had not occurred before.

The rationale of Hanson and her counterparts is becoming a global phenomenon, partly as a response to one of the greatest migrations in history – today, one in 100 people live outside the country of their birth.[1] Most of these are not refugees, who flee persecution, but migrants who move for a variety of reasons.

Some people leave home to join families who have already left, or just to experience new places. But the shift to a globalized economy – where every person *must* have something to sell – means more people have to sell their labour, often by migrating to areas where it is needed. Worldwide, 80 million people cannot make a living in rural areas and have moved to cities.[2] In places such as India, rural communities become indebted and have to send workers away to earn a living.

Other people move because economic expansion has destroyed local livelihoods – 30 million people worldwide have had to relocate within their own countries to make way for economic development.[2] And, as an area the size of Belgium becomes desert each year, by the end of the decade an estimated 60 million will no longer be able to live on their degraded land.[2] Most people migrate within the Majority World, and yet migration is often a consequence of the undemocratic, unsustainable development which the rich world continues to peddle across the globe. At the same time it is the West that is slamming its borders closed with a giant bang.

But people want to move so much that they scale fences, swim rivers, hide in ships, lorries and planes. Chinese migrants who stowed away on ships to the north of Australia then walked – barefoot on hot sand – for days to the nearest settlement 'made Superman look like a wimp,' in the words of a local police officer.[3]

But people don't move for a taste of a real-life action movie. Most go because they see it as the best or only way to improve their life. People run from poverty and hopelessness, only to face the biggest hurdle of all – the myth that migrants are a 'problem' rather than a symptom of the world's ills.

Even if the world had equality of opportunity, there would still be migrants. But if choices were not constrained by the need to make a living, or simply to survive, migration would be more voluntary.

Rather than working towards this goal, Western governments are lamenting their 'immigration crisis'. It is a subject which naturally promotes passionate debate; an issue that cuts to the heart of some of the most central issues of a nation – its population, workforce, money and ethnic make-up.

All governments seek to regulate their population. And immigration is one of the few levers they can successfully use. In Australia, which has a land area of 7.7 million square kilometres but the same population as Los Angeles, governments have used migrants to increase their population. In Denmark immigration was a big issue in the last elections despite adding only 0.2 per cent to the population annually.[4] And all over Europe immigration laws are being tightened, while immigration has become controversial in other developed countries such as Canada, the US, Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand and Japan.

In the US, a nation of 260 million, the conservative environmental lobby pushes for cuts to immigration. This group reasons that further immigration will strain resources already under pressure and lead to social and environmental decay.[4] 'Look at what has happened to Cairo,' they say, 'overcrowding, pollution, without a bit of green in sight. Unless you want that to happen here, keep migrants off our turf.'

Their false logic once again provides a convenient alternative to facing the real causes of resource strain – overconsumption and corporate activity. The truth is that economies could not survive without migration. Even the most highly skilled industries are dependent on migrant labour. A study of high-tech industries in San Diego in the US, and Hamamatsu in Japan, found that employment of unskilled cheap migrant workers meant that manufacturing stayed in those countries rather than going elsewhere. Wayne Cornelius, political scientist at the University of California at San Diego, says: 'You have to ask yourself, would the United States as a country be better off if these jobs were being performed in the Caribbean or in Indonesia, where there was no multiplier effect in terms of consumer spending, taxes being paid and so forth?'[4]

In some of the richest non-Western countries – Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates – migrants are more than half the workforce. As the European average age increases, further migration will be needed there to keep the economies running.[1]

This is not something which is recognized by the likes of Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the National Front in France, who advocates job preference for French citizens, no social security or national health care for migrants and forced repatriation of unemployed migrants. At the same time migrants support his lavish lifestyle: 'Le Pen lives with his three daughters and their four children. He also has two black Doberman

ED KASHI / NETWORK

MARK EDWARDS / STILL PICTURES

Ticket to ride – California, where the minorities are set to become the majority (above). Life on the margins – migrants shoulder the cost of environmental destruction (left).

Pinschers and a Vietnamese servant. The home is adorned, bizarrely, with life-size carvings of black men serving as lamps.'[5]

Holding up the rich economies provides badly needed income for the poor ones. Remittances from Turks working overseas financed two-thirds of the country's trade deficit in the 1990s. The 19 per cent of Lesotho's male labour force who are working in South African mines supply 37 per cent of household incomes in their home country. These incomes are threatened now more than ever before as a growing xenophobia develops with claims that migrants are competing for jobs.[6]

In fact migrants make rather than take jobs. The Australian Government estimates that from 1994 to 1995 on average each wealthy businessperson who immigrated created 15 jobs. Another report suggests that if Australia took in 24,000 more migrants than currently planned between now and 2007 national GDP per capita would rise by $A95 ($55).[4]

And migrants are not a huge strain on national resources. Lack of education and language skills – a problem also faced by the poor – do place costs on the state but these can be recouped. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in the US each migrant and their children contributes around $80,000 directly to the Government.[7]

But economic narrow-mindedness has captured government policy. Skills and education are all very well, but what many countries want from migrants is instant money. A new Thai policy allows the wealthy to immigrate in exchange for a $250,000 investment which can be made by buying stocks or government bonds or purchasing a condominium.[4]

The rich can move freely around the world. But the poor cannot. And here is the problem with economic rationalism. It ignores some of society's most important issues – its harmony, unity and diversity.

Migration has so changed the racial mix of many cities and countries that our great grandparents would scarcely recognize them. Following the Second World War, millions of Europeans sought to immigrate to Canada, Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. Jamaican poet Louise Bennet describes the change in Britain and its former colonies:

> 'Wat a joyful news, Miss Mattie
> I feel like me heart gwine burs'
> Jamaican people colonizin'
> England in reverse...
>
> Wat a devilment a Englan'!
> Dem face war an' brave de worse
> But I'm wondering how dem
>   gwine stan'
> Colonizin' in reverse.'[4]

Many countries have reacted to an influx of migrants by blaming the newcomers for unemployment and recession, and spreading racism and anti-immigration propaganda. As the former Soviet republics faced economic collapse and uncertainty in the early 1990s, politicians began curtailing the rights of migrants; the Ukrainian Government outlawed the use of Russian, which had once been a majority language but was now spoken by a minority of people.[3] And, in the US, part of the opposition to immigration focuses on the rise of political 'Latino power' as minorities are set to become the majority in states such as California.

When the East Asian currency crisis hit this year governments began blaming, then expelling, migrants. An alarming example is Indonesia where Chinese migrants were killed or raped and had homes and offices looted. The eight million Chinese in the country, some of whom had settled centuries ago, control about two-thirds of the Indonesian economy but most run small businesses. Comments from immigration officials in nearby nations reveal that Chinese are suddenly applying in large numbers to emigrate.[8]

Migrants everywhere live a tenuous existence – rarely gaining the same rights as non-migrants, their hosts always aloof. Blamed for a range of ills – from unemployment to crime, strained social services to lack of national unity – migrants are aware of just how easily their rights can be swept away by the majority. Ironically, Hanson says the same about Aboriginals as migrants do about non-migrants: 'I am fed up with being told, "This is our land." Well, where the hell do I go?'[4]

If individuals trace their ancestry back far enough, it is clear that we are all migrants, with a mix of blood running in our veins. Human relationships are not defined by lines on a map. This personal realization snaps the brittle links between people and national or racial superiority. It breaks the idea of a rigid homogenous nation completely, leaving space to mould new forms of society where migrants are accepted as 'us' not 'them'.

We can start by urging rich world governments to provide the Majority World with aid and fair trade to create the local livelihoods that make mass migration unnecessary. At the same time they must accept migrants themselves. This two-pronged approach is complementary – it ensures that movement is voluntary. The rich world cannot continue to push its notion of 'development' onto the Majority World while shutting out the human cost – millions of migrants.

Receiving governments also need to support migrants' rights – including equal rights to work, housing and political freedom. For example, the US has recently declared an amnesty for certain illegal migrants; a move that is far more sensible and less expensive than repatriation or lengthy appeals.

All countries should have progressive policies – formulated in conjunction with what is being done to prevent unwanted migration – rather than knee-jerk reactions. In addition, governments should actively encourage global equality: not use migrants as scapegoats for social divisions within their borders.

Unlike the cane toad, human migration has changed societies for the better. For many people in the West, migrants are their only contact with the Majority World. Acceptance of migrants begins on a personal level. My grandmother, working with migrant families in and around the Bonegilla migrant camp in Victoria, Australia, around 60 years ago, found that people were prejudiced against anything southern Mediterranean. Two generations later, few people notice whose parents are Italian or Greek. Melbourne now has more Greeks than any other city except Athens. People long to take trips to Italy and the Greek Isles. They live in Mediterranean-style homes and are addicted to risotto and baklava.

This mixing of cultures and races now begins early in life – in our families and at school. The curriculum is more diverse as students now come from a variety of backgrounds. In countries like Canada and Britain, education now teaches about all religions and cultures. In Australia one out of every 100 university students studies Japanese and all school pupils have some exposure to an Asian language.

And people learn about different cultures through friendships and relationships. A poll found that 57 per cent of US teenagers have dated someone of another race or ethnic group, compared to just 17 per cent in 1980.[4] In Australia only a quarter of all second-generation women and 27.5 per cent of all second-generation men choose partners from their own ethnic group. Bill O'Chee, of Chinese descent and from the same state as Hanson, says the Australian tan may not be a result of ultraviolet rays but of genes: 'I joke that eventually everyone will look like me.'[9]

Without migration my own life would be unimaginable – there would not be friends, lovers, family, mentors and colleagues. I feel comfortable in a place bursting with the vitality of migrants. Not the static scenario advocated by anti-immigrant politicians which produces the very thing it fears – a group of greedy people who refuse to associate with anyone different. Like colourless slimy toads, these isolationists sit alone in their ponds. With their cold eyes half-open to the world, they croak away, unintelligible to anyone but themselves. In the words of Nuc Le, a 79-year old Vietnamese migrant: 'I cannot believe Australians could turn themselves that ugly.'[4] ■

PHILIP WOLMUTH / PANOS PICTURES

ACTION

INTERNATIONAL

International Organization for Migration 17 route des Morillons, PO Box 71, CH-1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland. Tel: +41 22 717 91 11. Telefax: +41 22 798 6150.

Asian Partnership on International Migration Asia-Pacific 2000, PO Box 12544, Kuala Lumpur 50782, Malaysia. Tel: +60 3 255 9122. Fax: +60 3 253 2361.

AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND
see page 25.

AUSTRALIA

Blue Eyed is a powerful video on confronting racism and prejudice available from Marcom Projects. Tel: +61 7 3801 5600. Fax: +61 7 3801 5622. email: marcom@marcom.com.au

Federation of Ethnic Community Councils 221 Cope St, Waterloo 2017, NSW. Tel: +61 2 9319 0288. Fax: +61 2 9319 4229.

Refugee Council of Australia Locked Bag 15, Camperdown Post Office 2050, NSW. Tel: +61 2 9565 9116. Fax: +61 2 9550 2409.

BRITAIN see page 30.

Campaign Against Racism and Fascism BM Box 8784, London WC1 3XX. Tel: +44 171 837 1450. email: info@carf.demon.co.uk/

Commission for Racial Equality Elliot House, 10-12 Allington St, London SW1E 5EH. Tel: +44 171 828 7022.

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants 115 Old Street, London EC1 9JR Tel: +44 171 251 8706.

CANADA

Canadian Council for Refugees (and immigrants) 6839 Drolet # 302, Montreal, Quebec H2S 2T1. Tel: +1 514 277 7223. Fax: +1 514 277 1447. email: ccr@web.net

Canadian Ethnocultural Council 251 Laurier Ave West, Suite 1100, Ottawa, ON K1P 5J6. Tel: +1 613 230 3867. Fax: +1 613 230 8051. email: cec@web.net

Canadian League for Rights and Liberties Estrie Section,187 rue Laurier, Sherbrooke, Quebec J1H 4Z4. Tel: +1 819 567 7373.

US see page 15.

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1 Peter Stalker, *The Work of Strangers* (International Labour Organization 1994). 2 International Organization for Migration website http://www.iom.ch/ . 3 *The Weekend Australian* 3-4 May 1997. 4 *CISNEWS* (Center for Immigration Studies, 1998). 5 *World Press Review* May 1997. 6 Migration and Sustainable Development Conference (University of Sussex, 1998). 7 *The Economist* 29 November 1997. 8 *The Australian* April and May issues 1998. 9 *Far Eastern Economic Review* 23 October 1997.

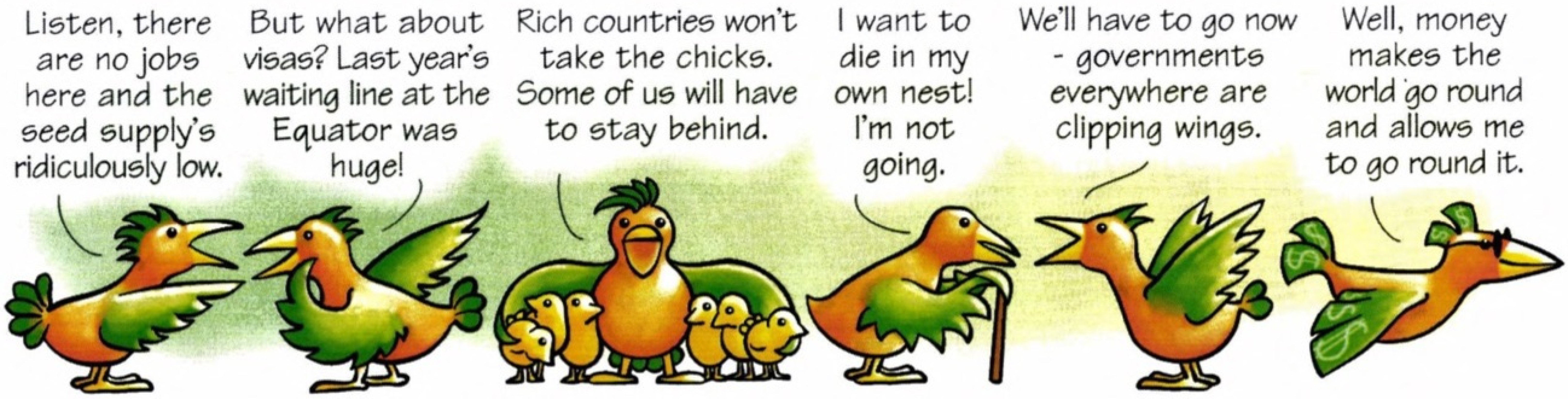
wzat! – migrants to Melbourne
for their local team.

THOMAS HOEPKER/MAGNUM

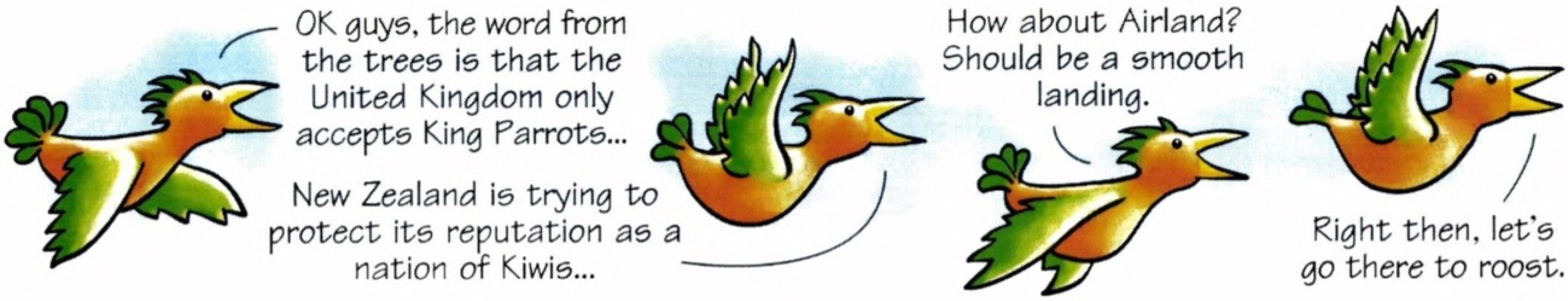
SCOT
ERIA
GLOVES

IF MIGRATORY BIRDS BEHAVED LIKE PEOPLE...

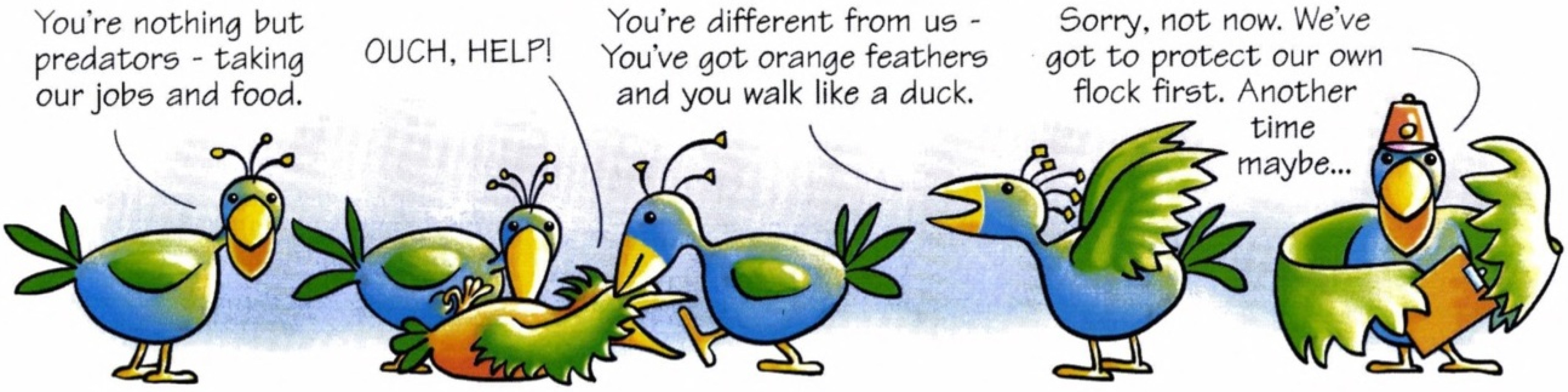
1. THEY COULDN'T MIGRATE FREELY BUT WOULD HAVE TO DECIDE TO MOVE FOR GOOD. MUCH SQUAWKING WOULD PRECEDE THE MOVE...


Listen, there are no jobs here and the seed supply's ridiculously low.
But what about visas? Last year's waiting line at the Equator was huge!
Rich countries won't take the chicks. Some of us will have to stay behind.
I want to die in my own nest! I'm not going.
We'll have to go now - governments everywhere are clipping wings.
Well, money makes the world go round and allows me to go round it.

2. ONLY A FEW BIRDS WOULD MAKE IT TO THE RICH COUNTRIES. AND THEY COULDN'T JUST LAND ANYWHERE...


OK guys, the word from the trees is that the United Kingdom only accepts King Parrots...
New Zealand is trying to protect its reputation as a nation of Kiwis...
How about Airland? Should be a smooth landing.
Right then, let's go there to roost.

3. AFTER LANDING, MIGRATORY BIRDS WOULD BE VIEWED AS A LESSER SPECIES...


You're nothing but predators - taking our jobs and food.
OUCH, HELP!
You're different from us - You've got orange feathers and you walk like a duck.
Sorry, not now. We've got to protect our own flock first. Another time maybe...

4. SOME BIRDS COULDN'T ADAPT TO THEIR NEW ENVIRONMENT...

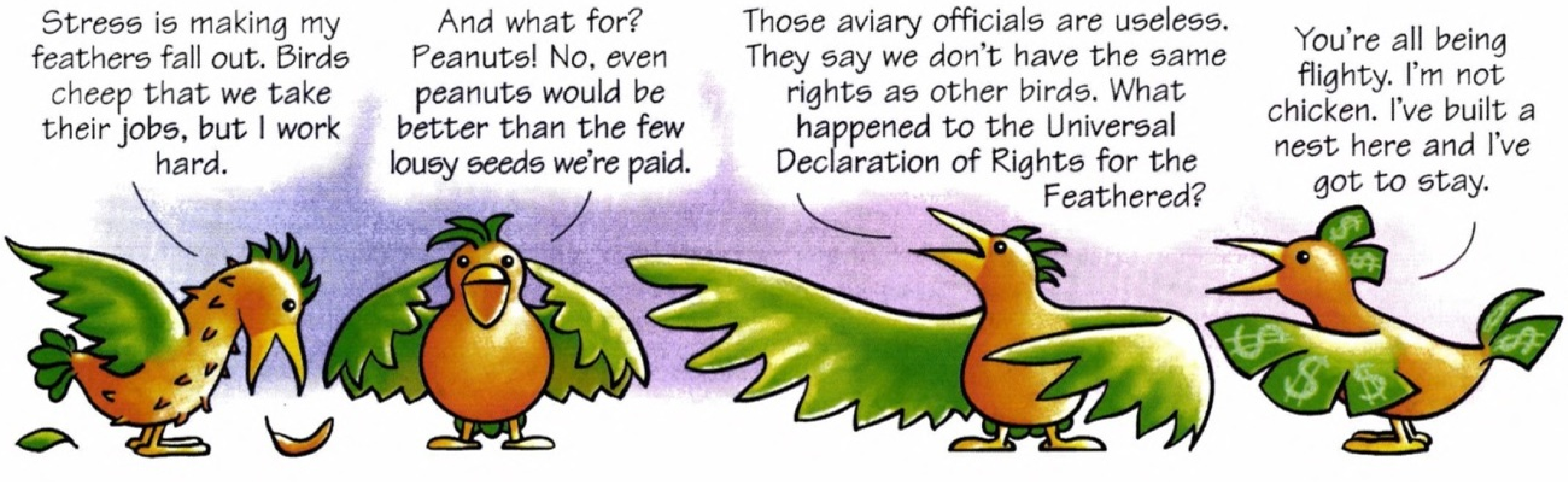
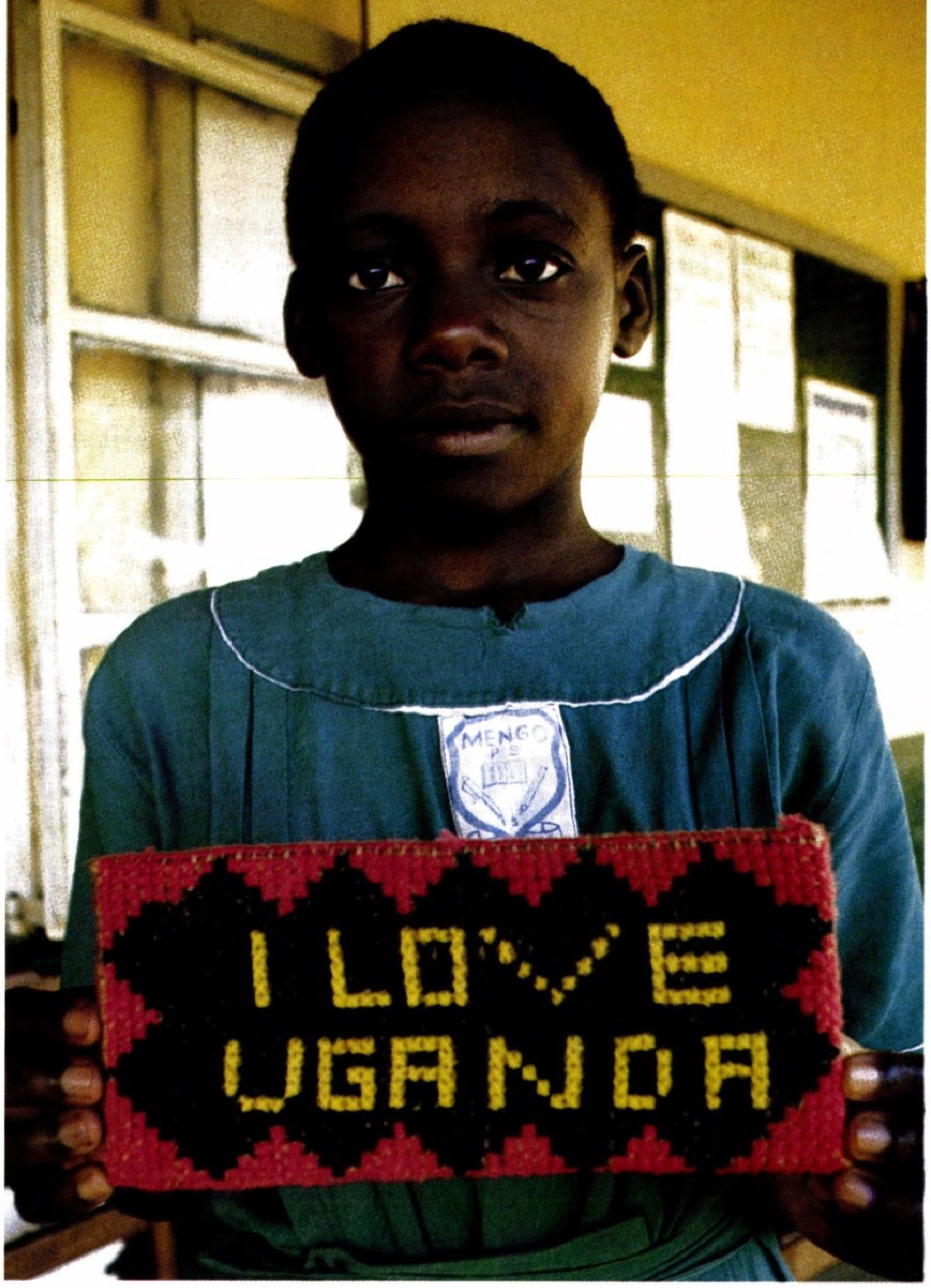

Stress is making my feathers fall out. Birds cheep that we take their jobs, but I work hard.
And what for? Peanuts! No, even peanuts would be better than the few lousy seeds we're paid.
Those aviary officials are useless. They say we don't have the same rights as other birds. What happened to the Universal Declaration of Rights for the Feathered?
You're all being flighty. I'm not chicken. I've built a nest here and I've got to stay.

ILLUSTRATION: ERIC JONES



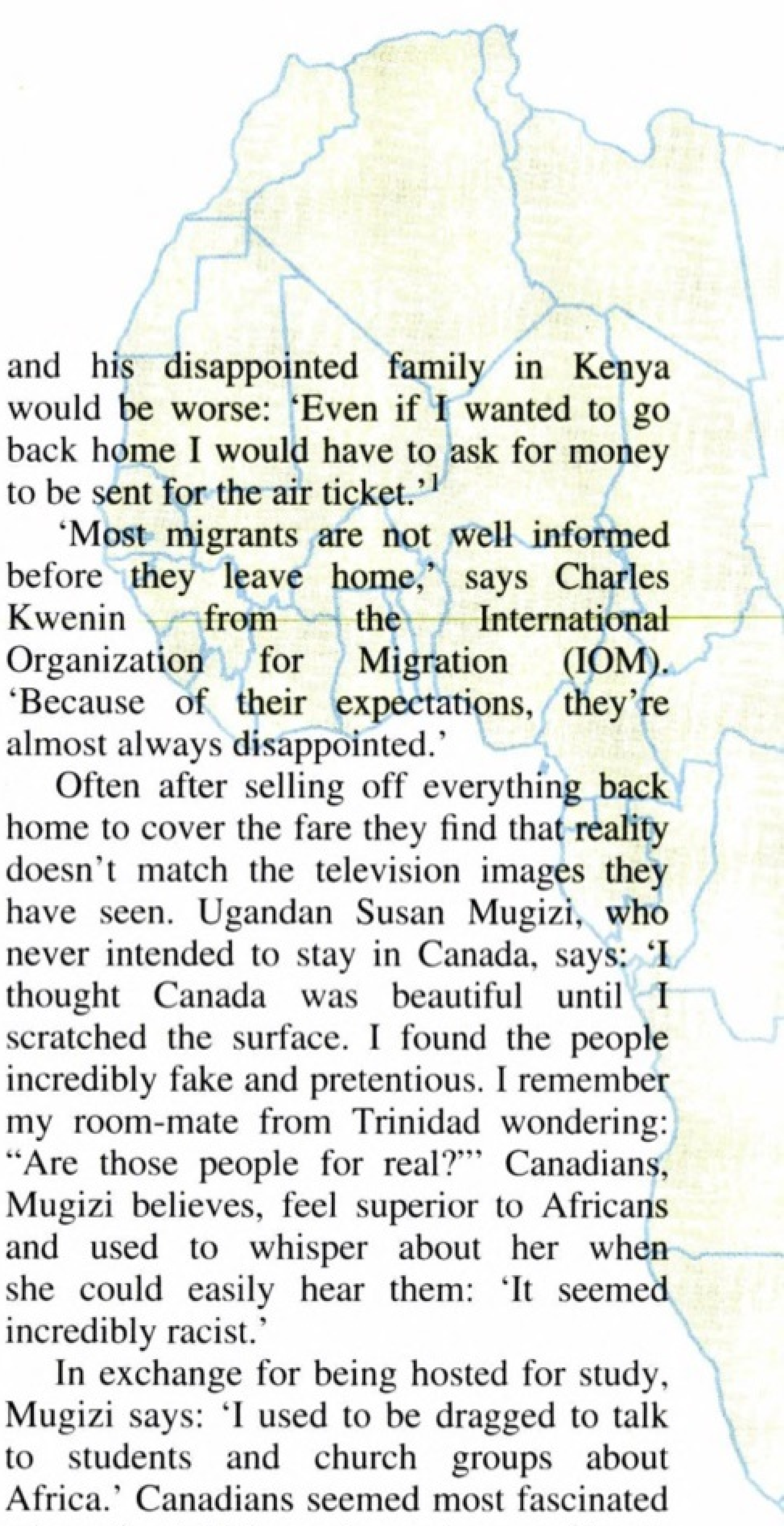
CRISPIN HUGHES / PANOS PICTURES

Northern exposure

Elaine Eliah talks to Africans who discovered that the West did not meet their expectations.

'EVERYONE back home thinks this place is heaven,' says Kenyan pastor Paul Akatsa about the US, 'but in reality it is not for the unprepared.' Akatsa, who offers Swahili services in a Texas church, has seen several Kenyan students who are lonely, impoverished and disillusioned. He knows three who have committed suicide. Twenty-one-year-old Joan Watoro does not let her family back home know that she works two eight-hour jobs daily or that she faces repayment of a $1,600 medical bill. 'I cannot tell them I haven't been in school for nearly a year. It would break their hearts.' Her parents will shortly send a younger sister to join her, yet Joan can't bring herself to explain the hardships she faces.

'It's a pity that you learn the reality when you are already here,' comments Paul Chesoni. Currently working and living in a home for the mentally impaired, he works nights, attends morning classes and sleeps in the afternoon. Though his life in the US is hard, Chesoni says facing unemployment and his disappointed family in Kenya would be worse: 'Even if I wanted to go back home I would have to ask for money to be sent for the air ticket.'[1]



'Most migrants are not well informed before they leave home,' says Charles Kwenin from the International Organization for Migration (IOM). 'Because of their expectations, they're almost always disappointed.'

Often after selling off everything back home to cover the fare they find that reality doesn't match the television images they have seen. Ugandan Susan Mugizi, who never intended to stay in Canada, says: 'I thought Canada was beautiful until I scratched the surface. I found the people incredibly fake and pretentious. I remember my room-mate from Trinidad wondering: "Are those people for real?"' Canadians, Mugizi believes, feel superior to Africans and used to whisper about her when she could easily hear them: 'It seemed incredibly racist.'

In exchange for being hosted for study, Mugizi says: 'I used to be dragged to talk to students and church groups about Africa.' Canadians seemed most fascinated when she told how she and some friends had been arrested for no reason. 'They were only interested in fulfilling their clichés about Africans,' she remarks.

When Mugizi sought part-time employment, she found herself relegated to factory jobs rather than higher-paying clerical work, despite being more educated than other applicants. One time her British accent so impressed an employer over the phone that she was told an interview would not be necessary and to report directly for work Monday morning. 'When I arrived I was kept waiting for hours and all of a sudden the job was not available,' she reveals.

Many Africans move temporarily to earn money or gain experience, as Kwenin realized when working with a group of Rwandan doctors in Belgium. Despite having just survived the 1994 genocide, the physicians were soon ready to return – if not to Rwanda, at least to another African country. Although they were skilled professionals being trained as specialists, Kwenin says: 'They weren't given the recognition that they expected.'

While researching his PhD, Kwenin found this desire to return was common. He interviewed a hundred fellow-Ghanaians living in Britain and concludes: 'They don't go to Britain with the intention of becoming an immigrant.' Of those surveyed, 93 per cent planned to return to Ghana, many after saving enough money for a house. Yet while 96 per cent of professionals living abroad planned to return home, among the unskilled only 75 per cent were as determined, due to their lack of money to return or the fact they earned better wages overseas.

The Kanani family, who left Uganda in the 1970s, settled in California after three years in Britain. They left after dictator Idi Amin exiled and seized the property of 50,000 Asians. 'There I was,' says Mehul, who was only six years old when they left, 'looking like a Mexican but with a British accent.' As the school's only child of Asian descent, telling other kids he was from Africa only made things worse. 'I got in a lot of fights,' he recalls.

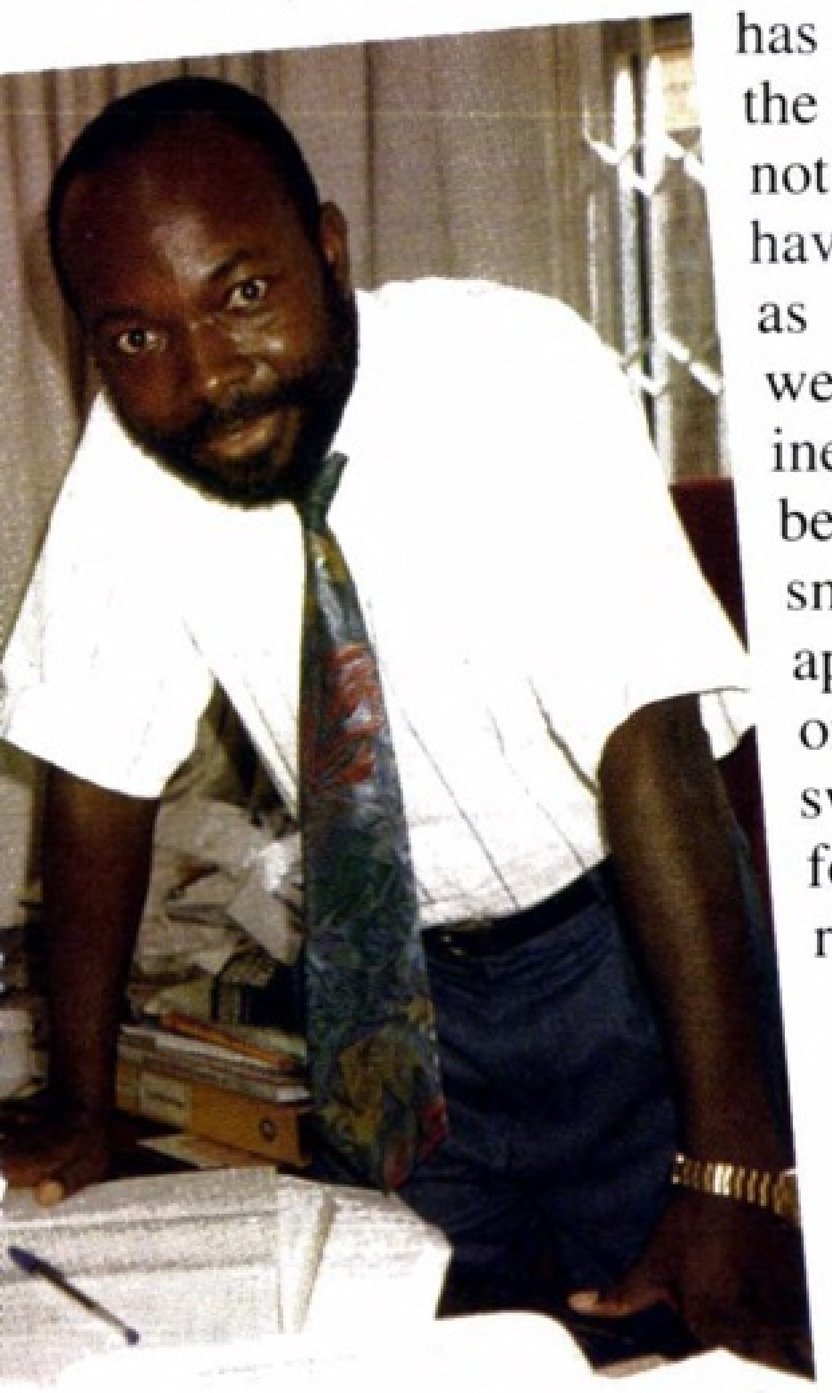
'I never thought of coming back,' remembers Manu Kanani, Mehul's father. Yet in the early 1990s, when President Yoweri Museveni invited Asians to reclaim their properties, Manu returned. He explains: 'I came here to die because I was born here.'

Now thirty-one years old, Mehul is economically successful in Uganda. He describes himself while in the US as 'going nowhere in a big hurry', playing in a rock-and-roll band. Then he came back to Uganda. 'I realized there was no quality film and how crazy the Africans were about picture-taking,' he says. As Kodak's distributor, he wholesaled two containers of film a month. Mehul then noted a lack of quality film processing in Uganda and purchased equipment from money he earned selling film. 'This is the place for an entrepreneur,' he enthuses.

After living in Britain and the US, Margueritte Tandekwire returned to Uganda and opened her own beauty salon. Ms Tandekwire says she didn't come from a poor family and that her youth in Uganda was relatively comfortable but admits: 'You're in Uganda and you think it's a bed of roses on the other side and you get there and it's hard.' She wishes she could take fellow Ugandans overseas so that they could see for themselves that Westerners work really hard.

PHOTOS THIS PAGE: ELAINE ELIAH

But young Ugandans still dream of an easy life in the West. Although Olivia Kitui has never been out of the country, she does not believe foreigners have to work as hard as she does. 'When we are here we imagine that US life must be very soft, smooth.' She would appreciate hot water on demand and a switch that starts food cooking – rather than having to light a *sigiri* (charcoal stove) each night when she gets home. It would also fulfil her dream to be earning $300 per month instead of scraping to earn her usual $100.



Migrant expert Charles Kwenin from the International Organization for Migration.

But seeing television images of Westerners living on the street confuses her as she believes that Western governments give 'an allowance for all citizens.' As Vice-Chair of Kampala's Women's Council, she enjoys working with many women each day and thinks most Westerners never even meet their neighbours. She says an opportunity to work overseas would be welcome. But she admits: 'Basically, Uganda is home.'

Often migrants do not realize the benefits of their home country until after they leave. As he describes the Ugandan village where he grew up, Dr Seggane Musisi explains: 'People have never experienced racism. The concept has never even occurred to them.' In Canada he believes his reputation among leading psychiatrists shields him from professional racism. But he says: 'Everyone here who is black has experienced racism at least once.' He outlines Canadian academic Philip Rushton's views that black people are biologically inferior, adding with a hint of bitterness: 'You just have to hear that once.'

'I'd never psychologically left Africa, but when both parents died, I knew I had to be physically living there,' admits Musisi. 'The thing that you will find in the West whether you're black, white or yellow is the failing to belong.' He says this 'anomie' – or lack of social contact – makes life meaningless for many migrants.

Simwogerere Kyazze had never heard the word 'anomie' when he described the total isolation he experienced during his year at New York University graduate school. Though he lived in his apartment for over a year, he spoke to the woman next door for the first time only after locking himself out and going through her apartment to get the key.

People he met were always wanting him to 'tell me about this or tell me about that,' rather than engaging in dialogue. Kyazze believes they were mutually lacking common experiences that make conversation comfortable. 'I thought I had prepared for America,' said the gregarious 27-year-old journalist. He'd read *Roots* and *The Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*. He'd studied *The LIFE History of the US* and kept up with *Ebony* and *The New Yorker* magazines.

'I concentrated on learning how people react,' he explains. He expected to find a consumer society that was informal, rude, and very hard working. What he found were people obsessed with fitness and celebrities. He comments: 'I psyched myself into a role I thought I had to play.'

Dreaming of the easy life – Martin Etomet in Uganda.

Riding home on the crowded subway, he found no-one used the seat beside him: 'A white person would get in and choose to stand rather than sit next to me.' Kyazze discovered that reading a copy of *The Economist* or *The New Yorker* changed the way others perceived him and could entice someone to sit beside him. Yet when their eyes met his, he often noted forced grins: 'I also found this level of phoniness when they tried to be polite.'

'The thing that you will find in the West whether you're black, white or yellow is the failing to belong'

He felt that people did not expect much from him in class. When he produced quality work they seemed to heap praise far too effusively, as if his performance had surprised or overwhelmed them. 'I wanted to relate to people without seeming to be throwing myself at them,' he reveals, yet fears of sexual harassment lawsuits prevented him from ever seeking an American girlfriend. When his phone bill hit $800 one month he realized: 'I just wanted to go home.'

But non-professionals like Martin Etomet, who drives a *boda-boda* (motorbike taxi) in Kampala, would jump at any opportunity – legal or illegal – to work overseas. The West continues to sound far more alluring than his present situation. He assumes it would be a more lucrative place for him to drive. As for office jobs, he figures that by the time business people take breaks for tea and go home for lunch, their six-hour days can't be all that bad.

Etomet would leave Uganda tomorrow if someone would let him – but never permanently. ■

Elaine Eliah is a freelance journalist working out of Kampala, Uganda.

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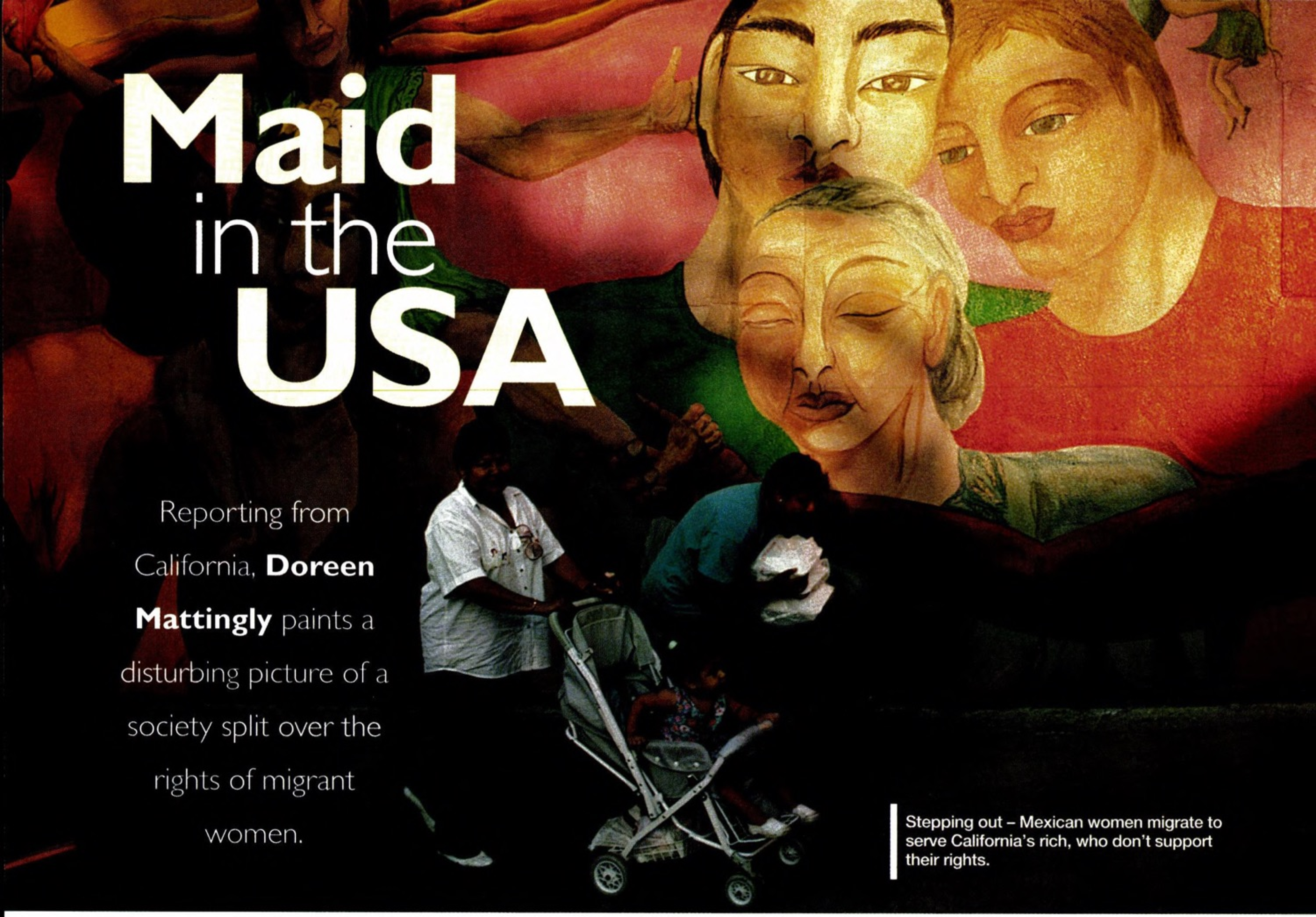
1. *The EastAfrican* 25-31 May 1998.

Maid in the USA



Reporting from California, **Doreen Mattingly** paints a disturbing picture of a society split over the rights of migrant women.

Stepping out – Mexican women migrate to serve California's rich, who don't support their rights.

S McCURRY / MAGNUM

FOR the three years since she illegally migrated to the US, Lourdes has been cleaning houses in San Diego. She earns $40 a day for her work, far more than what she earned as a primary school teacher in Mexico. She pools her wages with the higher, but more sporadic, pay that her husband makes by painting houses. Some months she is able to add to the savings account she hopes will pay for college for her daughter. She says: 'The advantage of cleaning is that no matter how bad times are, I have my job.'

Rachel, a physician, has been paying for housekeeping for as long as she can remember. Even with a weekly cleaner, meeting the needs of her two children, her husband, and her demanding career stretches her to the limit. She readily admits that without paid help, her household would be a complete disaster: 'I think that women who work and then have to do 100 per cent of the cooking and cleaning and laundry and shopping, I think that's terrible... Men don't feel it at all. They don't even think about it.'

Paid household work is a market solution that is available only to richer households

In San Diego and other cities in the south-western US, the mostly off-the-books business of migrant domestic workers is booming. In a recent survey 14 per cent of San Diego households report employing someone to clean their house or to care for young children or elderly family members.

Most employ Mexican women. Some are undocumented, not legally able to work in the US. Others are 'resident aliens' who discover domestic work pays more money and offers more flexibility than other kinds of jobs they can get.

Despite its advantages, it is the ideal job for very few people – low status, long hours, physically gruelling, unreliable pay and without any employment benefits. Workers are constantly subject to the whims, and in some cases harassment, of their employers. As one domestic worker explains: 'I wouldn't like my daughter to be a domestic because I wouldn't know how other people would be treating her. I want her to go to school and have a profession.'

Like many of the domestic workers I spoke with, Lourdes feels that Americans benefit from the cheap labour of migrant women: 'Most Americans like it that we immigrants do housework. I have met Americans with this job and they demand their rights... In a certain sense our bosses exploit us, because they know that for very little money they can demand a lot because people need the job.'

While she is appreciative of how hard her housekeeper works, Rachel is critical of migrant women who use government services in the US: 'Certainly the Mexicans that come over are doing work that probably no one else wants to do... But I remember as a medical intern we would have Mexicans come over to deliver their babies in the US. You know I feel a lot of personal empathy for them, but it's something that our government can't afford.'

Cheap domestic labour in San Diego is provided by workers who live either in or away from their employer's homes. Live-in work is a common first job for young undocumented migrant women like Teresa. She came to the US in 1990 with $50 in her pocket, hoping to earn money to send back to her mother and younger siblings in Mexico. She took a job as a nanny and housekeeper. She explains: 'For the people that don't have papers, like me, it's the only job that they can find that will accept them.' Wages for live-in work tend to be low: the average weekly pay is $135 for an average of 45 hours of work – $3.00 per hour, far below the Californian minimum wage of $5.75.

Live-out housekeeping, or 'job work', tends to pay better and can be done by women with their own children. Most workers earn on average $40 to $50 for the five to six hours they spend cleaning each house – above the minimum hourly wage, but the annual incomes of even the busiest domestic workers are below $10,000 (the US poverty level for a family of four is about $15,000).

Mexican labour used to be even cheaper prior to the 1980s, because the US

Government did not have to bear the cost of supporting workers' families. Most Mexican migrants to the US were men from a handful of poor rural states in the south-west of the country, who spent time each year labouring in California. Educating children and caring for the sick and elderly still took place in Mexico and was the unpaid responsibility of women.

Some, like Lourdes, came to the US to follow husbands, brothers and fathers who migrated earlier. Her father came as a farm worker in 1965; she came to California to visit him, met her future husband and decided to stay. Others, especially young, single women like Teresa, have come because they are unable to find any work in Mexico or hope to earn higher wages abroad. Teresa was 15 when her stepfather died and she quit school to earn money to support her mother and younger brothers and sisters. She first worked in a *maquiladora* (export factory) in Tijuana, and then came across the border to San Diego looking for higher wages.

Some American women view employing a domestic worker as an issue of gender equality. Studies show that husbands of working women have increased their share of housework, but women still do more. Paying another woman to do housework is a convenient solution for men, since it does not challenge the idea this is a woman's responsibility nor require that men do more around the house. Laurie, a 45-year-old woman who has been successful in the male-dominated field of architectural drafting, recounted how she decided to hire help: 'Both of us worked full-time and I was still cleaning the house, by myself. I felt that since we'd had the gardeners doing the gardening work, which was my husband's job, I could have someone in the house.'

If domestic service provides poor migrant women with jobs, and helps ease the workload of professional women, why do I worry that it has negative consequences for women? Because it divides working women on an issue that could potentially unite them – the care of their homes and children. Rather than demanding that men and the Government lighten the burden on working women, paid household work is a market solution that is available only to richer households. In San Diego the cost of migrant labour is low enough that professional women like Rachel and Laurie can ensure that their homes and families are cared for by hiring someone like Lourdes to clean the house, or someone like Teresa to mind the children. But what resources are available to help Lourdes and Teresa care for their homes and families?

Not only must working-class migrant women manage without paid help, they also face a political climate that is challenging their rights to government services for their families. This has supporters nationwide. But it is most evident in states like California, Florida, and Texas which have large migrant populations and therefore bear the economic costs of providing services.

In 1994 California captured national attention when it passed a voter referendum, Proposition 187, which would prohibit state and local governments from providing public education and emergency health care to illegal migrants. Two years later President Clinton's welfare-reform bill cut many forms of aid to legal migrants. Both Proposition 187 and cuts in federal aid to legal immigrants have since been overturned following long legal battles.

In June 1998, California voters again expressed their concerns about government services aimed at migrant families. This time the issue was bilingual education; 62 per cent of Californian voters approved Proposition 227, which will effectively eliminate bilingual instruction in California public schools. Most women who employ housekeepers believe that migrant workers should be allowed into the US, since there is a demand for their services. Yet many also think that migrants should not have rights to social services.

Paid household work will continue growing in cities like San Diego, but it is a solution that does little to change the status quo. It diffuses feminist calls for men and the Government to increase their responsibilities for caring for homes, children, and the elderly. Instead, it boosts the demand for the labour of migrant women, who have no options except low-wage household work. Because wealthier women such as Rachel and Laurie directly benefit from the poverty of migrant women like Lourdes and Teresa, they are unlikely to join forces with their housekeepers and advocate more government support for migrant families. Rather, the employment of domestic workers further divides local women.

Many steps can and should be taken to improve this situation. As domestic workers gain experience, they can begin to unite to professionalize and upgrade their working conditions. Employers should offer their domestic workers the same benefits they enjoy themselves, including paid sick leave, vacations, and payment of social security taxes.

Increased expenditure on public transportation and childcare would improve the lives of all poor working women, including domestic workers. Most of all, working women in San Diego and elsewhere need to communicate with each other about their daily lives.

When domestic workers and their female employers begin to discuss their common challenges balancing home and work, they will be able to change the terms of the debate and together improve the lives of all working women. ■

Doreen Mattingly is an Assistant Professor of Geography and Women's Studies at San Diego State University. This research was supported by the National Science Foundation.

PHILIP WOLMUTH / PANOS PICTURES

ACTION

HEAR OUR VOICES, a resource directory of migrant women's projects, is available from the Nationwide Women's Program of the American Friends Service Committee. AFSC, Nationwide Women's Program, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS brochures are available in English and Spanish on domestic workers' rights, pregnancy discrimination, sex discrimination, and race and gender discrimination. Equal Rights Advocates, 1663 Mission St, Suite 550, San Francisco, CA 94103. Tel: +1 415 621 0672. Free, or postage charge for over 10 brochures.

THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR MIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS is a core information and organization centre for immigration issues. 310 8th Street, Suite 307, Oakland, CA 94607. Tel: +1 510 465 1984. Fax: +1 510 465 1885. e-mail: nnirr@nnirr.org. Website: http://www.nnirr.org

ACCEPT IT: OUR PROGRESS
DEPENDS ON THEIR POVERTY

SUSAN MEISELAS / MAGNUM

Golden promises

Indonesian migrants find themselves pawns in a war for control of West Papua, reports

Andrew Kilvert.

'When I've got enough gold I'm going back to Surabaya,' says Usman. As he speaks he pans for gold in the silted river running through the central market and slum area of the West Papuan capital, Jayapura. He continues: 'I went out there because I was given land... The Government told us that we would be looked after if we moved there; they bought us plane tickets and told us we would have a good house, but out there it is very bad. Panning for gold in Jayapura is much better, I can make 100,000 *rupiah* in a single day (US$7).'

At the current rate of migration, the West Papuans will have become a minority in their own country by the year 2010

Irian Jaya – or West Papua, as it is called by those resisting the Indonesian occupation – has been the recipient of one of the most remarkable migration programs in recent history – the Indonesian Government's *Transmigrasi* Project. Since the 1960s, three-quarters of a million people have been moved there, mostly from the more densely populated central Indonesian islands of Bali and Java.

On my way back through the market, I come across an old man whose red-stained stumps of teeth bear testimony to a lifetime of chewing betel nut, the narcotic drug of choice. As I stand and chew with him, he leans over and gestures at the passing traffic. 'The Javanese migrants are no good. We want them to go home. Already too many of them have come over here. They think they are better than us but they are wrong. Life was much better when the Dutch were here.'

West Papua transferred from Dutch to Indonesian control in 1962 as a Cold War appeasement to President Sukarno, because the US feared that he was going to support the Eastern bloc. This occupation was ratified in 1969 by the United Nations in a vote called the 'Act of Free Choice'. Rather than being a majority vote by the people, it was carried out by a group of 1,025 who were selected by the Indonesian military (ABRI), and intimidated into 'choosing' Indonesian control.

PHOTOS: ANDREW KILVERT

Since then, proponents of the *transmigrasi* policy argue that the migrants are needed to develop the 'undeveloped' lands in the outer provinces. The Indonesian Government considers all forested lands to be 'undeveloped' even if they are being used for traditional purposes by indigenous peoples. At the current rate of migration,

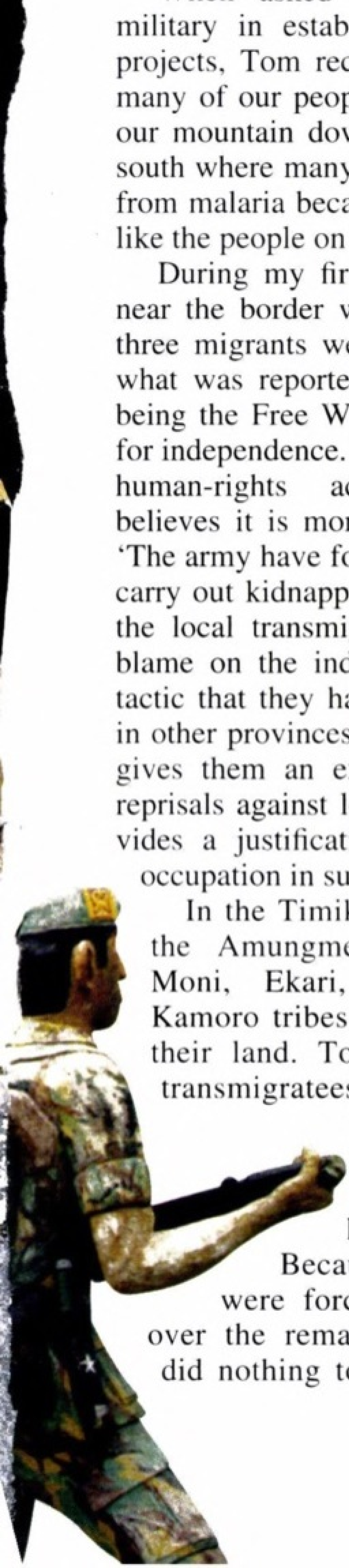
Gold rush – Usman and others left the migration camps for Jayapura (left).
Model citizens – statues of a soldier and a farmer remind locals of the importance of Indonesian unity (below).

the West Papuans will have become a minority in their own country by the year 2010. Merely using the term 'West Papua', signifying the land is not Indonesian, puts their lives in danger.

As one of the Amungme people, who live in mountains of southern West Papua near Timika, Tom Beanal witnessed the arrival of the first *transmigrasi* projects to the south of their lands in 1982. 'Life became very difficult for us after the *transmigrasi* camps began,' he says. 'Many, many military came with the transmigratees. We already had the copper mine squeezing us on one side and now we were being pushed out of our land on the other... The local people became very angry because the Government provided food, electricity and housing for the transmigratees but we received nothing, not even compensation for our lands.'

When asked about the role of the military in establishing the *transmigrasi* projects, Tom recalls: 'They killed many, many of our people. They moved us from our mountain down to the swamps in the south where many more of our people died from malaria because we are not used to it like the people on the coast.'

During my first visit to Arso, a camp near the border with Papua New Guinea, three migrants were killed in one day by what was reported in the local papers as being the Free West Papua rebels fighting for independence. However Jayapura-based human-rights activist John Rimbiak believes it is more complicated than this: 'The army have formed special units which carry out kidnappings and murders against the local transmigratees which they then blame on the indigenous peoples. It is a tactic that they have used very effectively in other provinces such as East Timor as it gives them an excuse to then carry out reprisals against local peoples. It also provides a justification for their continuing occupation in such large numbers.'



In the Timika district, it is not only the Amungme, but also the Dani, Moni, Ekari, Damal, Nduga and Kamoro tribes who have lost some of their land. Tom explains: 'So many transmigratees came that the local peoples were pushed further and further away, with less land to hunt and garden on. Because of this, many groups were forced to fight each other over the remaining land... The army did nothing to stop these fights. The land is our tradition; when we are forced from it, that tradition breaks down.'

The earth moves – environmental migrants

THERE ARE 25 MILLION environmental migrants in the world today – one for every 225 people. Rampant economic development consumes natural resources, leaving wasteland in its wake. People then shift to the fringes – to try and make a living from the land corporations or governments have spared. If this continues at its present rate, the number of environmental migrants will double by the year 2010.

- **There are 135 million people whose land is under threat of becoming desert.**
- **Around 900 million of the poorest people in the world, existing on less than a dollar a day, live in areas vulnerable to soil erosion, droughts, desertification and floods.[1]**
- **An estimated 200 million people will have to move due to rising sea levels by 2010.[2]**
- **Climate change is predicted to trigger the migration of 50 million people from famine-affected areas by the year 2050.[2]**
- **Around 550 million people already suffer chronic water shortage. Three billion are expected to live in countries without enough water by the year 2025.[2]**

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1 International Organization for Migration Website http://www.iom.ch/
2 Norman Myers & Jennifer Kent, *Environmental Exodus* (Climate Institute 1995).

But it is not only the indigenous peoples who have suffered. On the fringes of Jayapura city I am led down a side road to a group of rough shanties clustered under a mango tree. I am introduced to Dodi and Ekam, who spent two years in the *transmigrasi* camps at Bongo, near Arso. They tell me their story: 'The Government promised us land and housing and told us that we would be looked after until we could get our food crops going, but when we arrived there was no road to get our goods to and from a market. We left behind two of our children in Java so that we could have time to get ourselves established and then bring them over, but now we have nothing. After the first year in the camp the Government stopped providing us with food. At that time it was very dry and we hadn't been able to grow enough to support ourselves. In the next year 12 people died of malaria in our camp. That's why we've left, we can't live there anymore. Many people are leaving the camps to go to Jayapura to look for gold.'

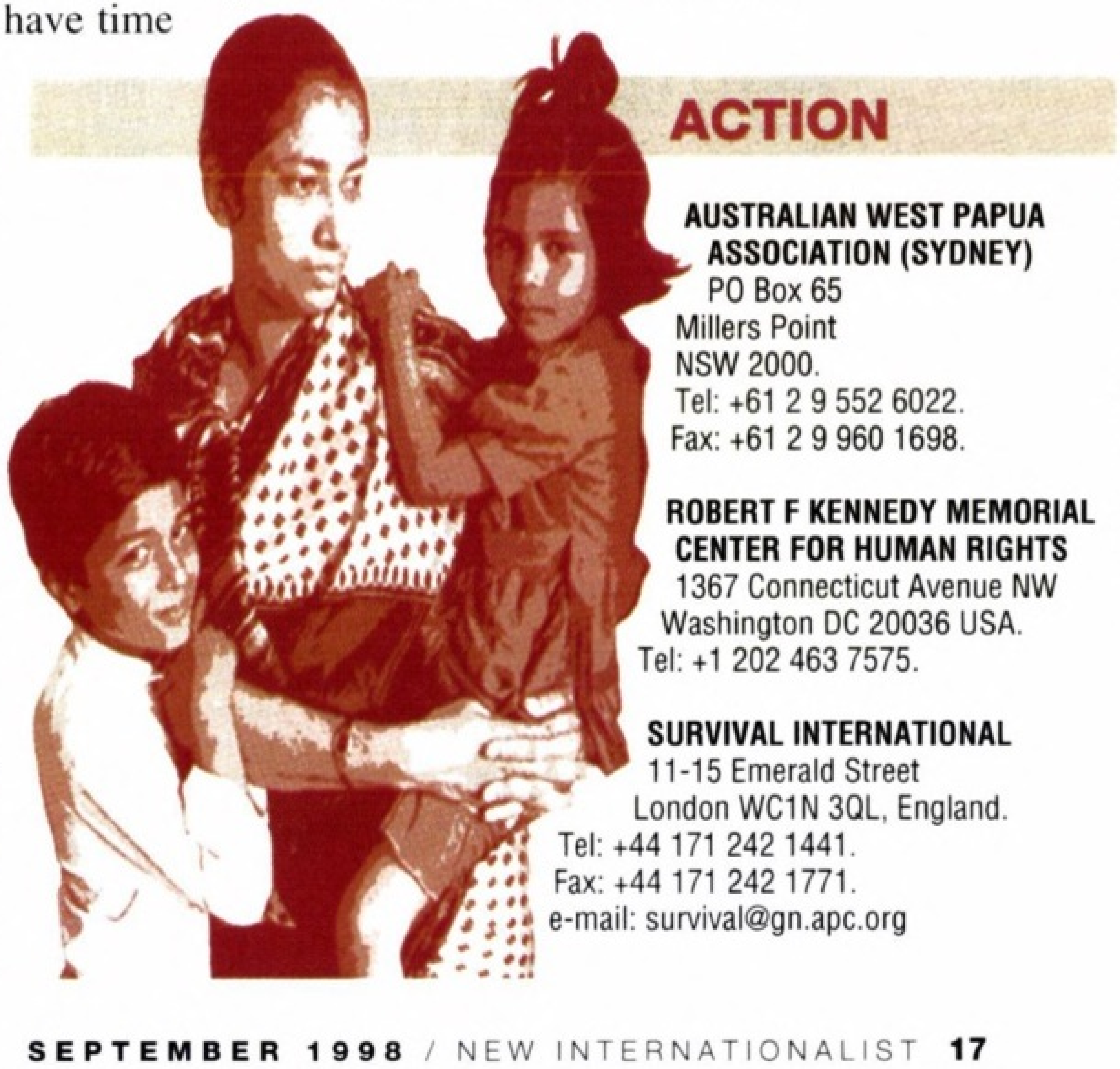
What are they going to do now? They both give shrugs of helpless exasperation; 'We've been in Jayapura for a month now and still haven't been able to find work. We want to return to our family in Java but there is no way we can afford the 800,000 *rupiah* ($US53) for the boat. Even if we both got work it would take us years to save that amount.'

But not everyone is disappointed with their lives in the *transmigrasi* camps. Towns closer to markets like Doyo seem more successful. One old man whom I met in the camps there was very happy with his farm. 'I have lived here for eight years now and I like it very much,' he says. 'The Government gave me a hectare of land and a house. This year my rice crop is going very well.' On the day of my visit around the camps at Doyo there were people hard at work tending crops and building houses. At one place they were preparing for a wedding between a Catholic West Papuan woman and a Muslim man from the migrant settlement. In the centre of the camp a concrete statue shows a soldier and migrant side by side. At the base of the statue is a slogan about Indonesian unity – an ironic statement given that *transmigrasi* projects have catalyzed conflict and social decay.

Despite seeing an active genocide carried out against his people over the last 30 years, John Rimbiak does not bear any resentment against the migrants: 'We don't want the migrants to leave,' he says. 'You can't tell the South Africans to go back to Holland or the Australians to go back to England; we recognize this. Instead we must work out ways of living together. We want our traditional land ownership recognized. We want control of our resources – and most importantly we want to live free from human-rights abuses.'

When I ask if it was safe for John to be talking to foreigners about what has been happening, Tom Beanal, who is sitting nearby interrupts: 'Now is the time to speak about our freedom. If we don't then we lose everything.' ■

Andrew Kilvert is an Australian-based freelance journalist with an interest in Indonesia.



PHILIP WOLMUTH / PANOS PICTURES

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TEIT HORNBAK / STILL PICTURES

The movers

MIGRATION INCLUDES:

- 30 million people forced to move within their own countries (internally-displaced). There are 16 million in Africa, 7 million in Asia, 5 million in Europe and 3 million in South America.[1]
- 10 million people who have left their homes because they can no longer make a living from the land – environmental destruction will make 60 million people landless or homeless by the end of the decade.[2]
- People moving from rural to urban areas – 80 million migrants live in cities and each year another one and a half million move there.[2]
- Migrant workers – over 35 million people work overseas. Asian women are the fastest-growing category of foreign workers, increasing by 800,000 each year.[3]

Migration

the facts

There are 100 million migrants and 20 million refugees in the world today. Refugees move because they have to. Some migrants go because they cannot make a living, others because they want a better life and some simply because they have enough money to travel. The number of migrants hosted by other countries continues to rise – a million people move each year, mostly within the Majority World.[1]

The shakers

Immigration policy-makers rattle off numbers of people to be allowed into a country. Officials then make practical decisions about who can cross their borders. Lengthy and intrusive bureaucratic procedures often leave potential migrants frightened and agitated.

COUNTRY	Admitted immigrants for 1998: population[4]	Top three source countries	Types of migrants
AUSTRALIA	1: 253	New Zealand Britain China	68,000 family and economic migrants per year. Children who sponsor their parents to immigrate have to earn at least A$23,400 ($13,765) a year.
Treatment of migrants[4]	Immigrants denied social security until they have been in Australia for two years. Although 60 % of recent immigrants are educated, only 30 % have jobs.		

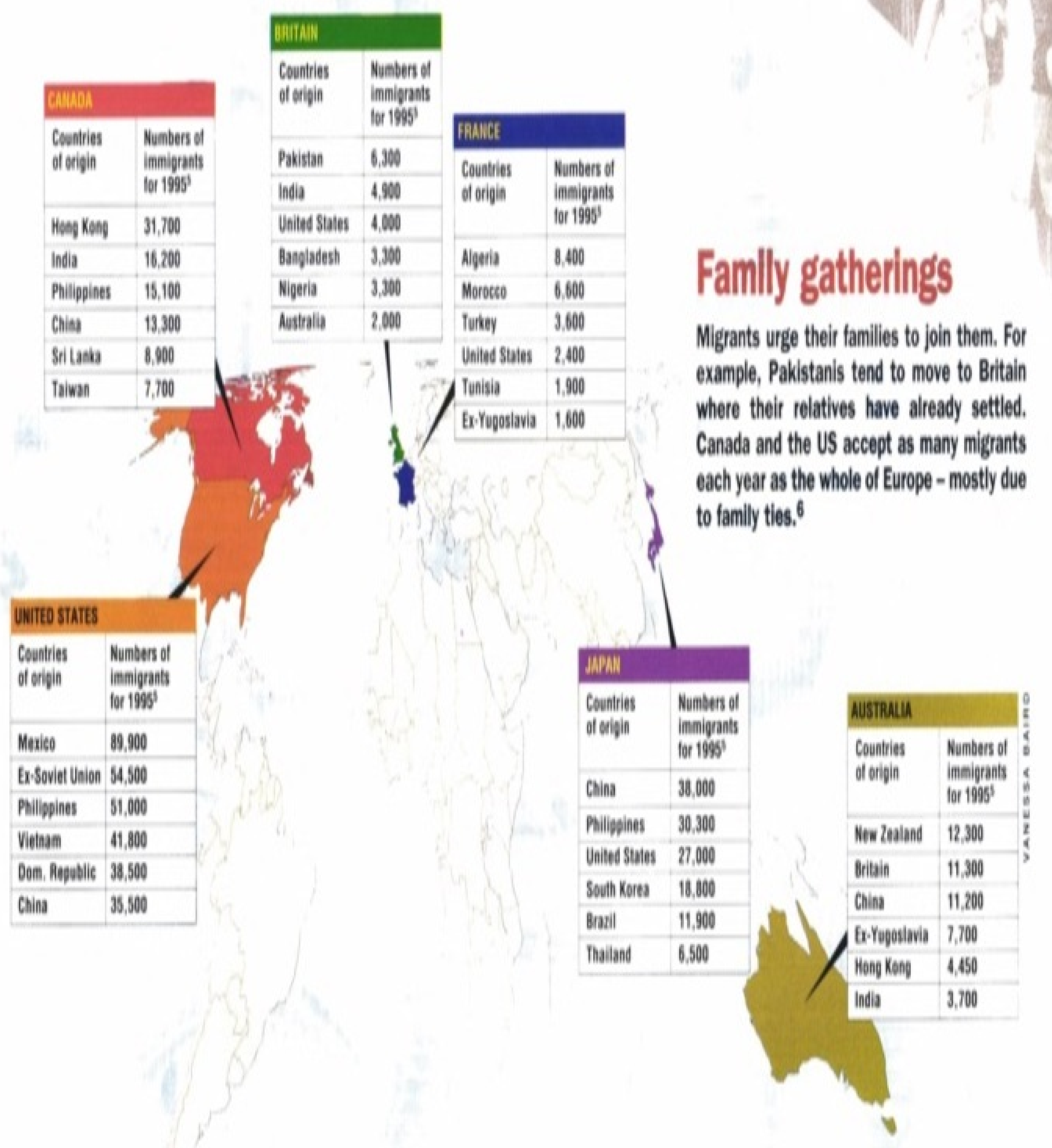
Overall Grade: 4/10

COUNTRY	Admitted immigrants for 1998: population[4]	Top three source countries	Types of migrants
CANADA	1: 143	Hong Kong India Philippines	115,000-127,900 economic and 58,000 family.
Treatment of migrants[4]	Spends around $286 per immigrant on language training. Satisfactory services. Current policy under attack from right-wing.		

Overall Grade: 7/10

COUNTRY	Admitted immigrants for 1998: population[4]	Top three source countries	Types of migrants
UNITED STATES	1: 388	Mexico Ex-USSR Philippines	480,000 family, 140,000 economic and 55,000 other migrant.
Treatment of migrants[4]	2.7 million illegal immigrants were legalized recently. $495 million is spent on incarcerating illegal migrants while services for immigrants remain minimal.		

Overall Grade: 5/10



CANADA

Countries of origin	Numbers of immigrants for 1995[5]
Hong Kong	31,700
India	16,200
Philippines	15,100
China	13,300
Sri Lanka	8,900
Taiwan	7,700

BRITAIN

Countries of origin	Numbers of immigrants for 1995[5]
Pakistan	6,300
India	4,900
United States	4,000
Bangladesh	3,300
Nigeria	3,300
Australia	2,000

FRANCE

Countries of origin	Numbers of immigrants for 1995[5]
Algeria	8,400
Morocco	6,600
Turkey	3,600
United States	2,400
Tunisia	1,900
Ex-Yugoslavia	1,600

UNITED STATES

Countries of origin	Numbers of immigrants for 1995[5]
Mexico	89,900
Ex-Soviet Union	54,500
Philippines	51,000
Vietnam	41,800
Dom. Republic	38,500
China	35,500

JAPAN

Countries of origin	Numbers of immigrants for 1995[5]
China	38,000
Philippines	30,300
United States	27,000
South Korea	18,800
Brazil	11,900
Thailand	6,500

AUSTRALIA

Countries of origin	Numbers of immigrants for 1995[5]
New Zealand	12,300
Britain	11,300
China	11,200
Ex-Yugoslavia	7,700
Hong Kong	4,450
India	3,700

VANESSA BAIRD

Family gatherings

Migrants urge their families to join them. For example, Pakistanis tend to move to Britain where their relatives have already settled. Canada and the US accept as many migrants each year as the whole of Europe – mostly due to family ties.[6]

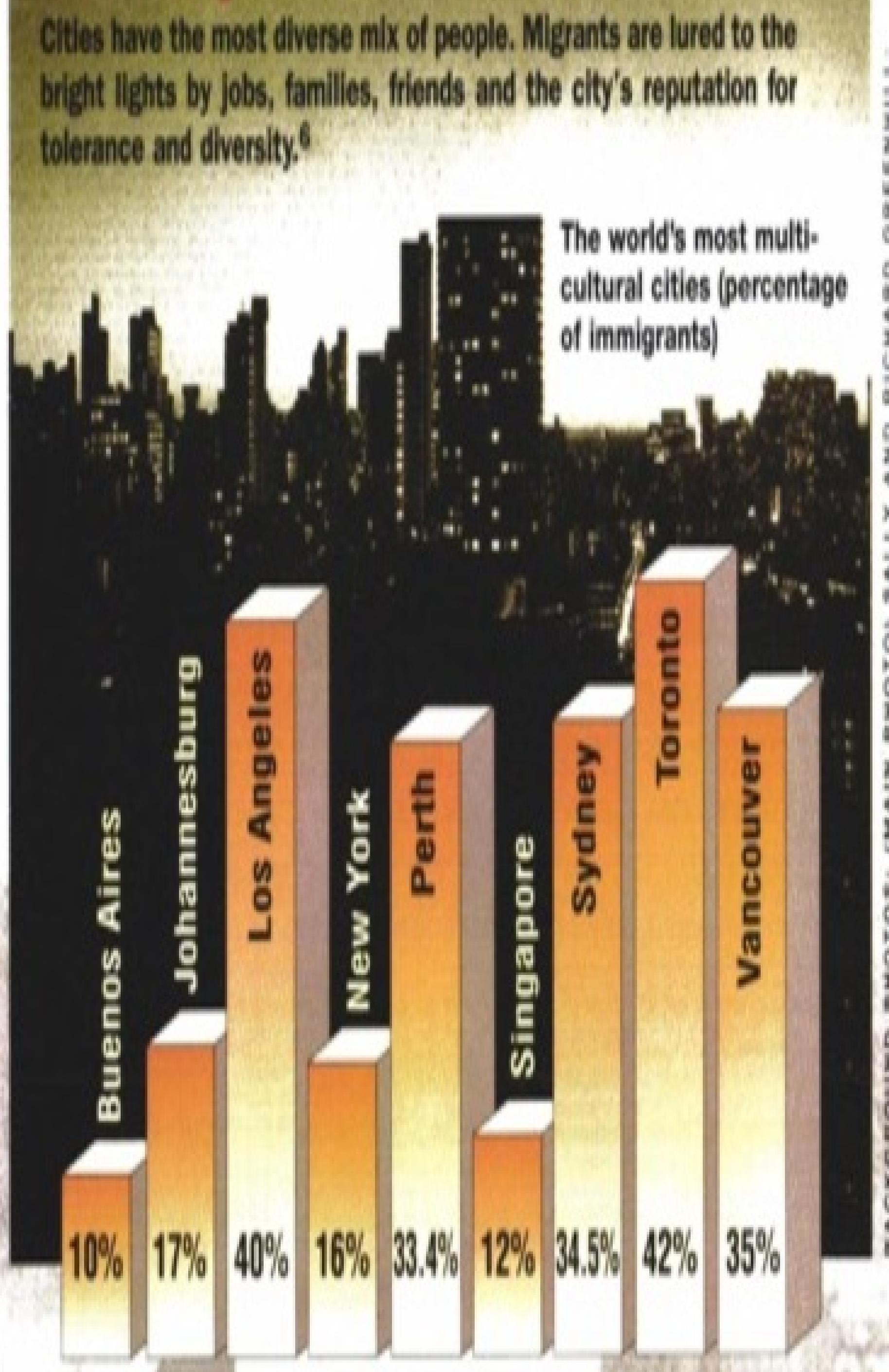
Hurting the host?

There is a popular but misguided belief that migrants harm host countries by taking jobs and straining social services. In fact, they enhance economic growth and create employment. They invest money, shop, pay taxes and use services, all of which contributes directly to the local economy. And they add skills, knowledge and labour to the workforce.

- Countries which have had high levels of immigration such as Australia, Canada, and the US have not had unusually high levels of unemployment.[1]
- Migrants in the US are more likely to own homes than non-migrants. They pay more in taxes than they take out through federal and state assistance.[6]
- In Australia an increase in immigration of one per cent from 1900 to 1975 led to an eight-per-cent increase in capital investment.[1]
- Professional migrants who arrived between 1961 and 1972 contributed an estimated $25 billion to the US economy.[6]
- In 1998, 48% of Americans say immigrants contribute more than they take, while 39% believe the opposite. This has changed from 1994 when only 36% thought migrants contributed more and 54 % believed the opposite.[6]
- In 1991 foreign workers sent $71 billion home – more than the total flow of international aid and second only to global profits from the oil trade.[7]

EthniCity

Cities have the most diverse mix of people. Migrants are lured to the bright lights by jobs, families, friends and the city's reputation for tolerance and diversity.[6]


The world's most multi-cultural cities (percentage of immigrants)

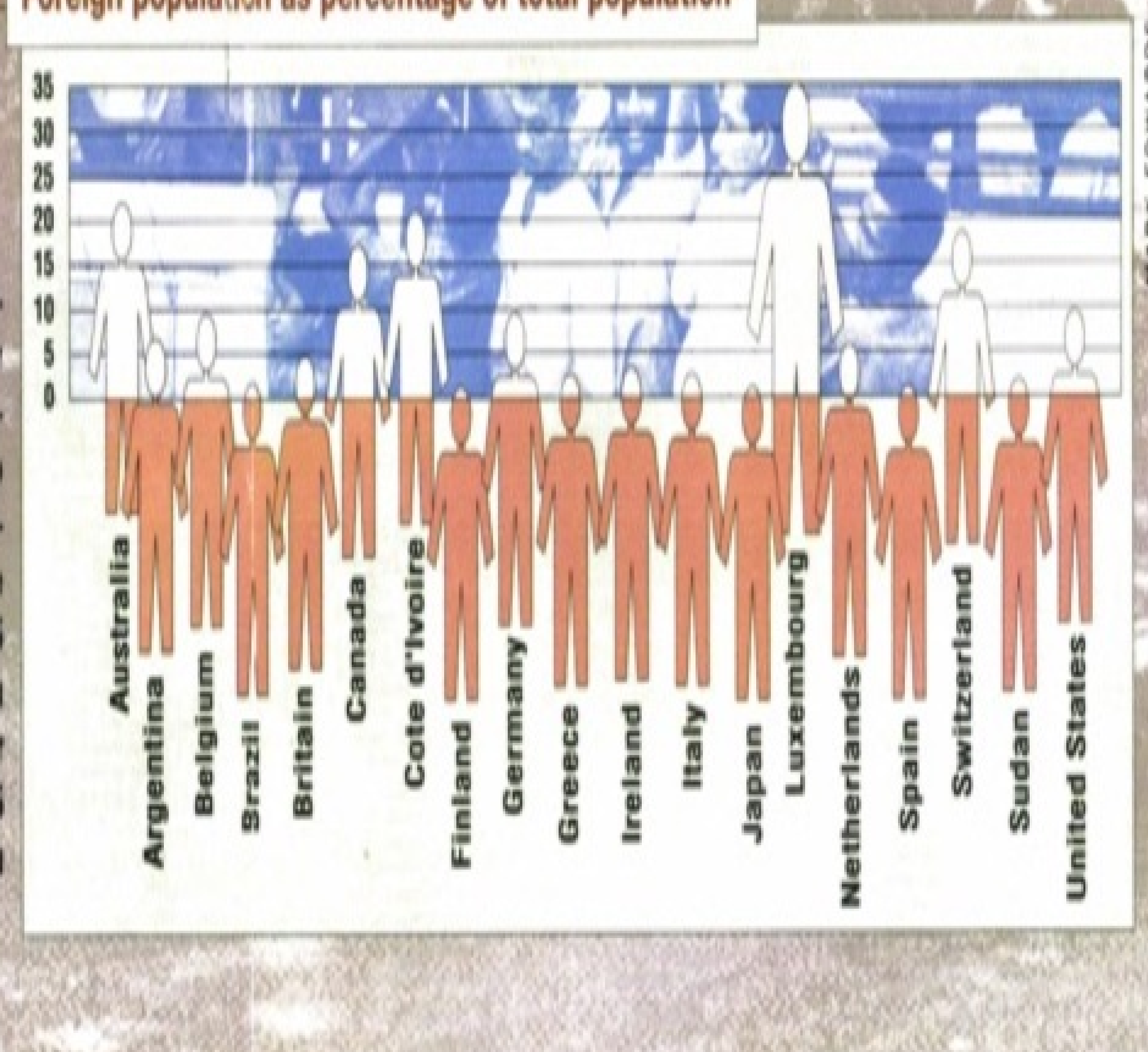
BACKGROUND PHOTOS: (MAIN PHOTO) SALLY AND RICHARD GREENHILL; (TOP RIGHT) SARAH BANCROFT / PANOS PICTURES

THE PRESS

A mixed crowd

Migration – including colonialism, settlement and family reunion – has created multicultural societies. It has also boosted the number of inhabitants – the population increase due to immigration since 1945 is 38% in Australia, 19% in Canada, 15% in the former West Germany, and between 5 and 10% in France, Belgium and Sweden.[6]

Foreign population as percentage of total population[5]



MARK EDWARDS

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1 Peter Stalker, *The Work of Strangers* (International Labour Organization 1994). 2 International Organization for Migration website http:// www.iom.ch/ 3 International Labour Organization Website http://www.ilo.org/ 4 *CANADA: A nation of immigrants* (RL Taylor Publishing 1998). 5 'Workers of the world', *The Economist* Vol 345 No 8041. 6 *Migration News* (Centre for Immigration Studies, 1998). 7 George Lodge, *Managing Globalization in the Age of Interdependence* (paper) 1997.

No place like home

Neil Bissoondath

uncovers the cracks in Canada's multicultural mosaic.

THREE or four years into the new millennium, Toronto, Canada's largest city, will mark an unusual milestone. In a city of three million, the words 'minorities' and 'majority' will be turned on their heads and the former will become the latter.

Reputed to be the most ethnically diverse city in the world, Toronto has been utterly remade by immigration, just as Canada has been remade by a quarter-century of multiculturalism.

It is a policy which has been quietly disastrous for the country and for immigrants themselves.

The stated purpose of Canada's Multiculturalism Act (1971) is to recognize 'the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contribution to Canadian society'. It promises to 'enhance their development' and to 'promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins'. The bicultural (English and French) nature of the country is to be wilfully refashioned into a multicultural 'mosaic'.

The architects of the policy – the Government of then-Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau – were blind to the fact that their exercise in social engineering was based on two essentially false premises. First, it assumed that 'culture' in the large sense could be transplanted. Second, that those who voluntarily sought a new life in a new country would *wish* to transport their cultures of origin.

But 'culture' is a most complex creature; in its essence, it represents the very breath of a people. For the purposes of multiculturalism, the concept has been reduced to the simplest theatre. Canadians, neatly divided into 'ethnic' and otherwise, encounter each other's mosaic tiles mainly at festivals. There's traditional music, traditional dancing, traditional food at distinctly untraditional prices, all of which is diverting as far as it goes – but such encounters remain at the level of a folkloric Disneyland.

> ***How seductive it is, how reassuring, that Greeks are always Zorbas, Ukrainians always Cossacks: we come away with stereotypes reinforced***

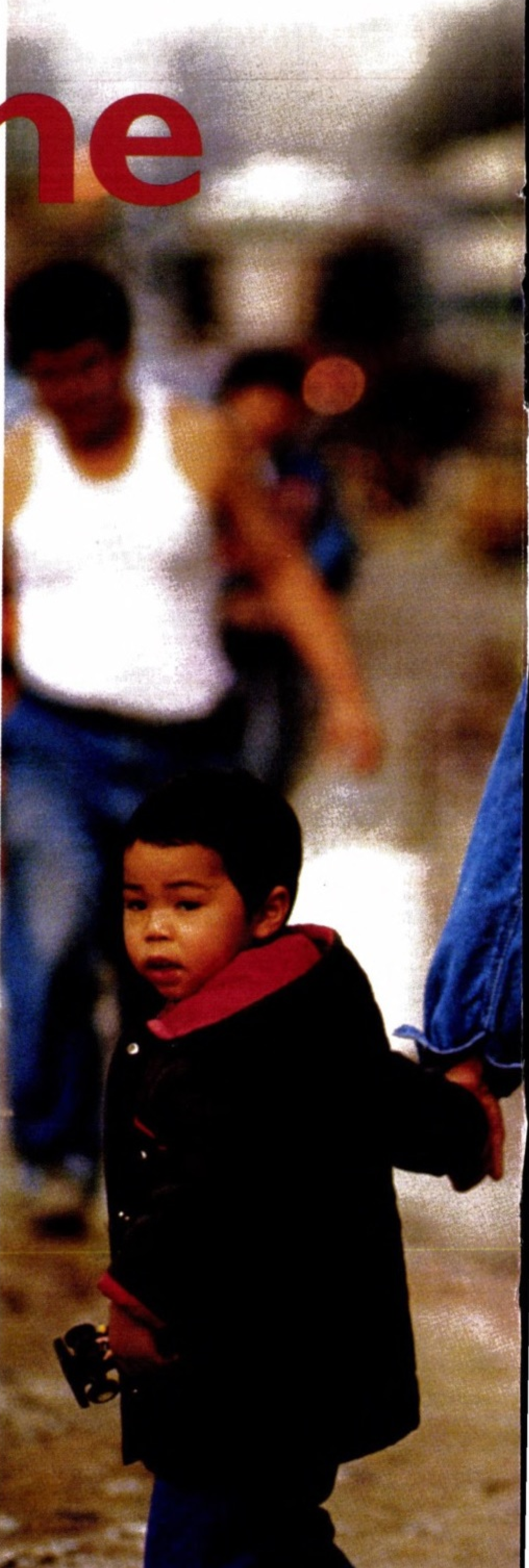
We take a great deal of self-satisfaction from such festivals; they are seen as proof of our open-mindedness, of our welcoming of difference. Yet how easily we forget that none of our ethnic cultures seems to have produced poetry or literature or philosophy worthy of our consideration. How seductive it is, how reassuring, that Greeks are always Zorbas, Ukrainians always Cossacks: we come away with stereotypes reinforced.

Not only are differences highlighted, but individuals are defined by those differences. There are those who find pleasure in playing to the theme, those whose ethnicity ripens with the years. Yet to play the ethnic, deracinated and costumed, is to play the stereotype. It is to abdicate one's full humanity in favour of one of its exotic features. To accept the role of ethnic is also to accept a gentle marginalization. It is to accept that one will never be just a part of the landscape but always a little apart from it, not quite belonging.

In exoticizing and trivializing cultures, often thousands of years old, by sanctifying the mentality of the mosaic-tile, we have succeeded in creating mental ghettos for the various communities. One's sense of belonging to the larger Canadian landscape is tempered by a loyalty to a different cultural or racial heritage.

When, for instance, war broke out between Croatia and Serbia, a member of the Ontario legislature, who was of Croatian descent, felt justified in declaring: 'I don't think I'd be able to live next door to a Serb.' That he was speaking of a fellow Canadian was irrelevant. *Over there* mattered more than *over here* – and the cultural group dictated the loyalty. Ironic for a country that boasted about its leading role in the fight against apartheid.

Often between groups one looks in vain for the quality that Canadians seem to value above all – tolerance. We pride ourselves on being a tolerant country, unlike the United States, which seems to demand of its immigrants a kind of submission to



A DUCLOS / FRANK SPOONER

American mythology. But not only have we surrendered a great deal of ourselves in pursuit of the ideal – Christmas pageants have been replaced by 'Winterfests'; the anti-racist Writers Union of Canada sanctioned a 1994 conference which excluded whites – but tolerance itself may be an overrated quality, a flawed ideal.

The late novelist Robertson Davies pointed out that *tolerance* is but a weak sister to *acceptance*. To tolerate someone is to put up with them; it is to adopt a pose of indifference. Acceptance is far more difficult, for it implies engagement, understanding, an appreciation of the human similarities beneath the obvious differences. Tolerance then is superficial – and perhaps the highest goal one can expect of Canadian multiculturalism.

Another insidious effect of this approach is a kind of provisional citizenship. When 100-metre sprinter Ben Johnson won a gold medal at the Seoul Olympics, he was hailed in the media as the great Canadian star. Days later, when the medal was rescinded because of a positive drug test, Johnson became the Jamaican immigrant – Canadian when convenient, a foreigner when not. Tolerated, never truly accepted, his exoticism always part of his finery, he quickly went from being one of *us* to being one of *them.*

This makes for an uneasy social fabric. In replacing the old Canada, based on British and French tradition, with a mosaic (individual tiles separated by cement), we have shaken our sense of identity. In a country over 130 years old, we are still uncertain who we are.

A major 1993 study found that 72 per cent of the population wants, as one newspaper put it, 'the mosaic to melt'. Canadians were found to be 'increasingly intolerant' of demands for special treatment made by ethnic groups – a Chinese group who wanted a publicly funded separate school where their children would be taught in Chinese by Chinese teachers; a Muslim group who claimed the right to opt out of the Canadian judicial system in favour of Islamic law. Canadians wanted immigrants to adopt Canada's values and way of life.

Many immigrants agree. They recognize that multiculturalism has not served their interests. It has exoticized, and so marginalized, them, making the realization of their dreams that much harder. The former rector of the Université du Québec à Montréal, Claude Corbo, himself the grandson of Italian immigrants, has pointed out that multiculturalism has kept many immigrants 'from integrating naturally into the fabric of Canadian and Quebec society... We tell people to preserve their original patrimony, to conserve their values, even if these values are incompatible with those of our society.'

Which leads to the other false premise on which multiculturalism is based. It assumes that people who choose to emigrate not only can but also *wish to* remain what they once were.

The act of emigration leaves no-one unscathed. From the moment you board a plane bound for a new land with a one-way ticket, a psychological metamorphosis begins – and the change occurs more quickly, more deeply and more imperceptibly than one imagines.

Tolerance is superficial – and perhaps the highest goal one can expect of Canadian multiculturalism

I arrived alone in Toronto from Trinidad in 1973, an 18-year-old with dreams but no experience of the world. A year later, I returned to Trinidad to visit my parents. Within days I realized the extent of the change that had come not only to me, but to all I had left behind. Even after so short a time, old friends had become new strangers, and old places remained only old places. Already Trinidad – its ways, its views, its very essences – was receding, becoming merely a memory of place and childhood experience. *Feeling* had already been wholly transferred to the new land, to this other country which had quickly become my home. Certainly, for others the process is slower and often less evident – but it is inexorable. The human personality is not immutable.

Multiculturalism, which asked that I bring to Canada the life I had in Trinidad, was a shock to me. I was seeking a new start in a land that afforded me that possibility. I was *not* seeking to live in Toronto as if I were still in Trinidad – for what would have been the point of emigration? I am far from alone in this. As the political scientist Professor Rias Khan of the University of Winnipeg put it: 'People, regardless of their origin, do not emigrate to preserve their culture and nurture their ethnic distinctiveness... Immigrants come here to become Canadians; to be productive and contributing members of their chosen society... Whether or not I preserve my cultural background is my personal choice; whether or not an ethnic group preserves its cultural background is the group's choice. The state has no business in either.'

The immigrant dream – of financial and social success; of carving out a place within the larger society – is grand in its simplicity. Requiring great courage, it is self-limiting on no level. All one asks is the freedom and fairness – through anti-discrimination legislation, if necessary – to fulfil one's potential. A vital part of that freedom is the latitude to recognize and welcome inevitable change in society and the migrant. One may treasure a

Sprinter Ben Johnson – Canadian when convenient, foreigner when not.

A DUCLOS / FRANK SPOONER

private, personal identity built from family lore and experience, all the while pursuing the public integration vital to wider success. To be put in the position of either obliterating the past or worshipping it is, for the individual, an unnecessary burden that leads to a false and limiting theatre of the self.

Not long ago, my daughter's teacher wanted to know what kind of family the children in her first-grade class came from. For most of the children, born in Quebec City into francophone families that have been here for over 200 years, the answer was straightforward.

Then it was my daughter's turn. Her father, she explained, was born in Trinidad into an East Indian family; having lived in Canada for a long, long time, he was Canadian. Her mother was born in Quebec City, a francophone. She herself was born in Montreal.

'Ahh!' the teacher exclaimed brightly, 'So you're from a West Indian family!'

My daughter returned home deeply puzzled. At six years of age she had been, with the best of intentions, handed an identity crisis.

In some ways she was lucky. We were able to sort out her confusions. In other parts of the country – in Toronto or Vancouver – where ethnic identity has become a kind of fetish, my daughter would have had to deal with a far more complex proposal. To be true to her inherited ethnicities, she would be: Franco-Québécoise-FirstNations-Indian-Trinidadian-West Indian-Canadian. Indeed, for her to describe herself as simply 'Canadian' with no qualifying hyphen would be almost antagonistic.

The weight of this hyphen was signalled as far back as 20 years ago by the feminist writer Laura Sabia when she said: 'I was born and bred in this amazing land. I've always considered myself a Canadian, nothing more, nothing less, even though my parents were immigrants from Italy. How come we have all acquired a hyphen? We have allowed ourselves to become divided along the line of ethnic origins, under the pretext of the "Great Mosaic". A dastardly deed has been perpetuated upon Canadians by politicians whose motto is "divide and rule"... I am a Canadian first and foremost. Don't hyphenate me.'

Or, one might add, future generations.

Canadian multiculturalism has emphasized difference. In so doing, it has retarded the integration of immigrants into the Canadian mainstream while damaging Canada's national sense of self. Canada has an enviable record in dealing with racism – our society, while hardly perfect (we too have our racists of all colours), remains largely free of racial conflict. And yet we do ourselves a disservice in pursuing the divisive potential in multiculturalism. With an ongoing battle against separatism in Quebec, with east-west tensions, we are already a country uncomfortably riven. Our 'mosaic' does not help us.

In recognition of its growing unpopularity, official multiculturalism has had its status downgraded from a ministry, to a directorate, to a department. Canada, for the foreseeable future, will continue to be a nation open to immigrants – and one committed to combating racism, sexism and the various other forms of discrimination we share with other societies. Beyond this, because of the damage already inflicted by multiculturalism, we need to focus on programs that seek out and emphasize the experiences, values and dreams we all share as Canadians, whatever our colour, language, religion, ethnicity or historical grievance. And pursue *acceptance* of others – not mere *tolerance* of them.

Whatever policy follows multiculturalism it should support a new vision of Canadianness. A Canada where no-one is alienated with hyphenation. A nation of cultural hybrids, where every individual is unique and every individual is a Canadian, undiluted and undivided. A nation where the following conversation, so familiar – and so enervating – to many of us will no longer take place:

'What nationality are you?'

'Canadian.'

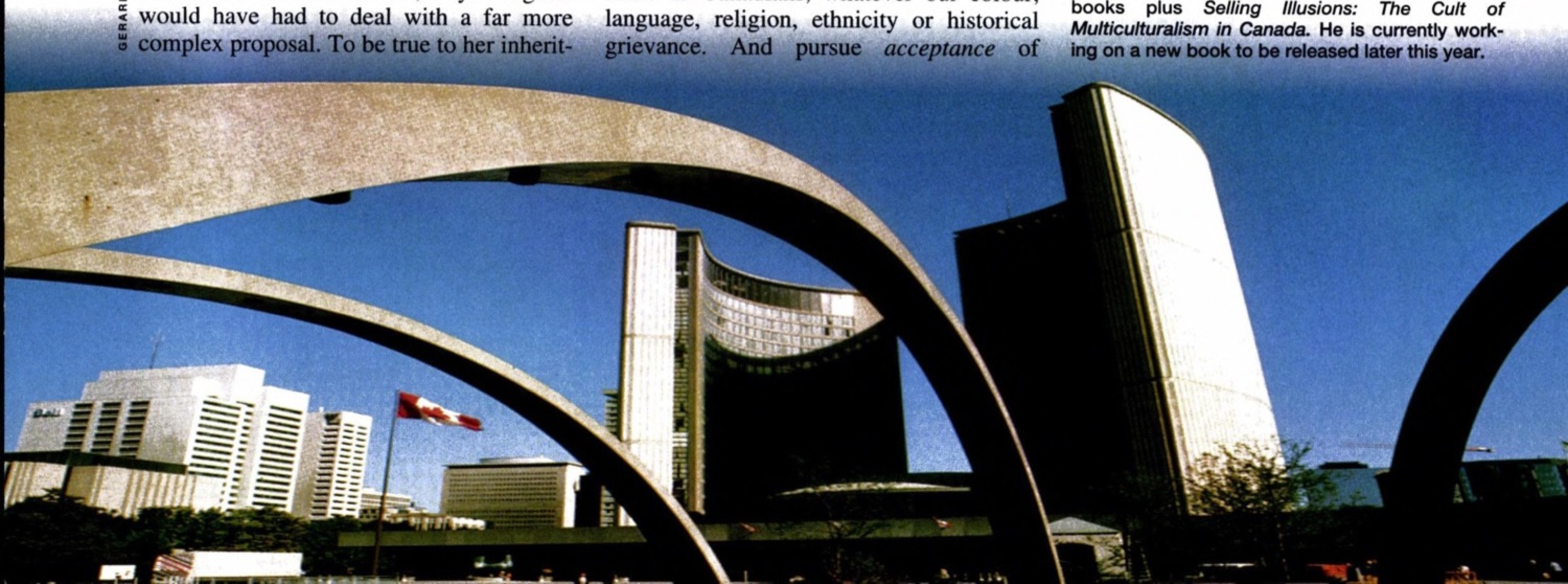
'No, I mean, what nationality are you *really*?'

The ultimate goal must be a cohesive, effective society enlivened by cultural variety; able to define its place in the world. Only in this way might that member of the Ontario legislature and his neighbour no longer see each other as Serb and Croat but as Canadians with a great deal more in common than their politically-sanctioned blindness allows them to perceive.

In the end, immigration is a personal adventure. The process of integration that follows it is a personal struggle within a social context that may make the task either more or less difficult. Multiculturalism in Canada has the latter effect but it may matter very little, because integration – the remaking of the self within a new society with one's personal heritage as invaluable texture – is finally achieved in the depths of one's soul. Many Canadians, like me, have simply ignored multiculturalism, by living our lives as fully engaged with our new society as possible, secure in the knowledge of the rich family past that has brought us here.

I will never forget the bright summer evening many years ago when, fresh off the plane from a trip to Europe, I stood on my apartment balcony gazing out at the Toronto skyline, at the crystal light emanating off Lake Ontario and beyond. I took a deep breath of the cooling evening air and knew, deep within my bones, that it was good to be home. ■

Neil Bissoondath is a writer of four fictional books plus *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*. He is currently working on a new book to be released later this year.



GERARD SIOEN / RAPHO / NETWORK

Siriporn Skrobanek

reports from Bangkok on the horrors of a modern form of slavery.

Set me free...

'I was told by an acquaintance to work at his restaurant in Japan. I decided to accept his offer as I thought my family might improve their life if I sent them my salary. Soon after my arrival in Japan, I realized that I was sold. My life since then has been like that of an animal.

'I was sold three times. I begged my last owner to let me go home but she said I owed her lots of money which I had to pay back by sleeping with customers. I was always scolded and forced to do all kinds of terrible things.

'It is impossible to describe how horrible and miserable my life was. For six-and-a-half months I was totally controlled by her. Every day I had to go out and sleep with men. I had no physical nor spiritual freedom. She threatened that wherever I escaped to, I would be traced and killed and so would my parents in Thailand. What I did was the only way to set me free from her. There was no other alternative.'

This letter was written by Gun, a 25-year-old Thai woman from an impoverished rural family, to her Japanese lawyer. In 1991, she and two Thai friends escaped from their captor by stabbing her to death. They fled with her bag, thinking that it contained their passports. They did not know that in the bag there was seven million yen ($80,000) in cash. They were arrested in the same night. In 1994 the prosecutor charged them with premeditated murder and they received a life sentence – though due to international campaigns and petitions their imprisonment was reduced and they are now serving their last year in prison.

In the global flow from South to North, there are now as many women migrants as men. But whereas male migrants are absorbed into the formal sector, female migrants have no option but to join the informal one – as domestic workers, 'entertainers' (a euphemism for prostitutes) and waitresses. These low-paid jobs have limited prospects and little security. Women such as Gun from countries like Thailand are pushed into the sex industry in more advanced countries within their own region or in the North.

Several hundred thousand are victims of international trafficking which generates billions of dollars of profit for the traffickers. A recent study on illegal business in Thailand revealed that trafficking of women for the purpose of prostitution generates higher profits than illegal gambling, the drugs trade or arms trafficking.

Most women who are trafficked are poor and uneducated. Like Gun, they allow recruitment by an agent as this seems like their best option. Often they are not told they will have to work as prostitutes. Poverty and unemployment lead them to pay money – which they can little afford – to be taken to a new country with the promise of a new job. They pay an agent's fee of 15,000 to 30,000 *baht* ($350 to $600). When the women are sold to employers in Japan, this amount is added to the bond which they must pay back, usually at more than double the agreed price. Japanese employers pay the agent thousands more for the service of a woman when she arrives in Japan, which means that her debt is inflated to between 400,000 to 700,000 *baht* ($9,200-16,200). And then women are often resold before their first debt is paid back. It can take them years to pay all of these debts.

Japan, the richest country in the region, has become a major destination for trafficked women. 'During the boom, we had to charter a whole plane to carry all the women,' a female trafficking agent told a magazine in Thailand. Her network included organized criminal gangs in Japan and corrupt Thai officials. Local organizations estimate that 80,000 to 100,000 Thai women are working illegally as prostitutes in Japan.

Trapped – thousands of poor Thai women are trafficked to Japan.

RON GILING / PANOS PICTURES

The United Nations Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery considers trafficking of women as a serious crime and a gross violation of human rights. Yet there is no efficient international mechanism to stop the crime and provide redress for affected women, whose numbers are growing in every region of the world.

There are penal codes dealing with trafficking in all countries involved. But most only enforce their immigration laws to punish and deport the women, instead of considering them subject to a modern form of slavery. This revictimizes the women who are criminalized and endangered by their illegal status.

Nida, from northern Thailand, had been trafficked to Japan where she fell out of a window escaping a 'client': 'I felt a sharp pain in my back, and I could not move my legs. I was still conscious when my friend took me to the hospital. The first hospital would not admit me because I was a foreigner. And others did not want to give me any treatment because I tested HIV-positive.' As illegal immigrants, women who are trafficked are left to fend for themselves.

Escape is not easy, though many try. Nor is earning a living afterwards. Nuj, from the Thai side of the Thai-Burmese border, escaped from her agent with a little money. She plans to do a hairdressing course. 'Then I'll go home and open my own shop. When that day comes, perhaps all the depressing experiences will fade away from memory.'

The answer is not to fight against migration or prostitution per se but to stop the abusive practices against women who are trafficked. And to recognize that these women are simply trying to make a living. We should focus on how to promote women's rights to freedom of movement, ensure that they are able to make well-informed decisions – and stop their exploitation. ■

PHILIP WOLMUTH / PANOS PICTURES

ACTION

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Siriporn Skrobanek researches trafficking in Thailand and is one of the authors of *The Traffic in Women: Human Realities in the Sex Trade.*

A hypocritical host

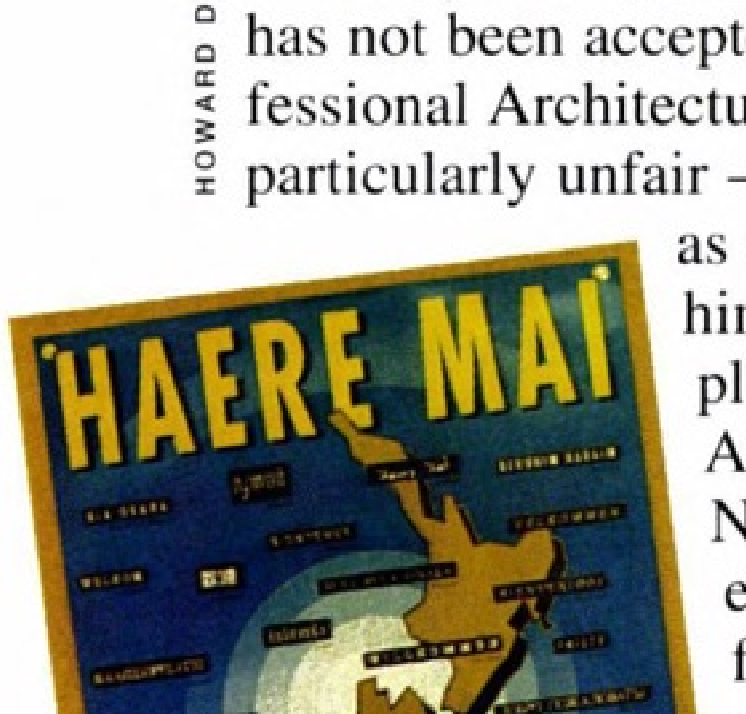
New Zealand's immigration policy was expected to generate an economic miracle. **Penny Hartill** examines why it has been a disaster.

MIGRANTS ARE NOT THE PROBLEM
Stop racist attacks
STOP RACIALISM

HOWARD DAVIES / PANOS PICTURES

Manel Hanna, her husband Maged Nessim, and their seven-year-old son Mina have been in Aotearoa/New Zealand since November 1996. Manel has a Bachelor's degree in English literature, Maged is a qualified architect. Both speak perfect English. Maged worked in his profession for 17 years in their homeland, Egypt, before the family decided to migrate to New Zealand. Maged explains: 'We had heard the lifestyle here was excellent, a good place to bring your children up. Also it was the easiest place to get residence.'

The reality has been very different. Maged's degree in architecture was recognized by the Qualifications Authority, but has not been accepted by the country's professional Architectural Institute. This seems particularly unfair – it was his qualification as an architect that gained him entry in the first place. Since 1987, like Australia and Canada, New Zealand has adopted a points system that favours bringing skilled migrants into the country who can benefit the economy.



Maged is even turned down for unskilled work. When asked why, he replies: 'Because I am foreign; because the way I speak English is different. This country is so beautiful, but migrants aren't welcome here.'

For the last year-and-a-half, Maged has been working part-time as a delivery person for Kentucky Fried Chicken. Demoralized and ashamed, the couple do not know how much longer they will stay in New Zealand. 'Back in Egypt, we had a beautiful home and a good income. We have lost so much. I want to work; it is humiliating to be on the dole. I am so frustrated, it is not what we expected,' says Manel.

It has been 10 years since New Zealand abandoned its racially discriminatory policy of favouring migrants from the 'the traditional source countries' – Britain and Ireland. The new immigration policies were implemented as part of a broader program of social and economic deregulation. Roger Kerr, Chief Executive of the Business Round Table, says: 'Immigration policies need to be liberal. Migrants bring with them knowledge, technological know-how and links to foreign markets.' The Government argued that if New Zealand wanted to be accepted as a trading partner with different countries – especially the Asia/Pacific – then New Zealanders had to be prepared to have a variety of people living and doing business here.

The policy seemed initially to be a success. Immigration figures for 1991 to 1996 show that the number of Asian immigrants rose 76 per cent to 173,000. Now nearly 5 per cent of the population are Asians. In 1994, 33,000 Asian immigrants were accepted in the space of 12 months. They brought NZ$722.6 million ($355 million) with them.

But according to Dr Manying Ip, Lecturer and Social Historian at the University of Auckland, the policy is fundamentally flawed. 'It is totally one-sided and no consideration whatsoever is given to the welfare of the migrants themselves. Migrants become merely pawns on an

Open for business – but many migrants find New Zealand is a closed shop.

OPPOSITE PAGE (MAIN PHOTO): NEW ZEALAND HERALD

economic chessboard. Any policy that neglects one partner in a process that requires close co-operation of both sides is predestined to fail.'

Visions of a 'human cattletruck' come to mind in an address given by the Government Treasurer, Winston Peters, at the country's first-ever Population Conference in November 1997: 'We need to import highly skilled people from time to time and we need a policy that facilitates this.' Otherwise the country, like many other developed nations, will face a declining population in the next 20 to 30 years. Manying says: 'New Zealand and its Government needs to ask itself what we have to offer to new migrants.' She goes on to reveal cases of Asians passed over for jobs and rental housing. Despite a more open Government immigration policy, the country is still a closed shop.

Data on the employment status of migrant groups who have lived in the country for fewer than 10 years is enlightening – only 20.5 per cent of Chinese and 9.9 per cent of Koreans are in the 'wage earner' sector. Sixty per cent of Chinese identify themselves as 'not in the labour force'. Yet these people were carefully chosen as 'the cream' under a rigid and competitive points system. It is a tremendous waste of valuable human resources.

A 1997 study concluded that of the 49 per cent of Chinese who had been business people in their own country, only 20 per cent said they were still in business. Their incomes had dropped by an average of $NZ20,000 ($9,800) a year.

Medical doctors Mr and Mrs Shanger, from Sri Lanka, migrated to New Zealand with their seven-year-old daughter, Sri, and four-year-old son, Hari, in June 1996. Despite being favoured under the immigration points system, neither had their qualifications recognized and were forced to live in separate countries. Mrs Shanger found work on a Pacific island. 'I thought it was important that I kept up my practical experience, so I made the difficult decision to go with my youngest son to somewhere that recognized my qualifications until I was able to sit my examinations in New Zealand,' explains Mrs Shanger.

Both doctors agree that it has been very difficult without a job. 'Back in Sri Lanka we had a good home and land. It's hard not to get depressed.' Their current home is a humble one. Six cracked chairs make up the only furniture in their living room.

President of the Federation of Ethnic Councils and a practising local doctor, Dr Nagalingham Rasalingham agrees that immigration policy is a knee-jerk reaction to a struggling economy. He states: 'There was no consultation between professional bodies such as the New Zealand Medical Association and the Government. Thousands of people legally had the right to enter the country but had no right to work. In fact, up until recently, new migrant medical doctors were not even allowed to use the medical school library.' To date, two new immigrant medical doctors have committed suicide.

Immigrants are suffering high unemployment and emotional hardship because they were deceived about life in New Zealand before moving. Nagalingham reveals: 'I have seen many sad cases of family break-ups, psychiatric issues and suffering because of misguided expectations.'

In October 1995 the points system was tightened. Since then, doctors, dentists, veterinarians and other professionals need to be registered for practice in New Zealand before they get points for their qualifications. In a move that was denounced as racist, a three-hour English-language test was introduced that must be passed by the principal applicant. Dependants who could not pass the test each had to pay a $NZ20,000 ($9,800) bond.

Not surprisingly, Asian immigration has collapsed almost overnight and many migrants, disgruntled and short-changed, have decided to go elsewhere. In November 1996, the top two sources of migrants were Britain and South Africa. Overall, more than 50 per cent of immigrants under the post-1995 system came from 'traditional white' sources, compared with 28 per cent under the old.

The root of the problem may lie in the attitude of New Zealand's base population. Polls conducted asking: 'Do you think there are too many/too few/just the right numbers of Asian, Polynesian and British migrants to the country?' have been tediously predictable. The public generally found there were too many Asians and Polynesians and just about the right number of British.

The underlying message seems to be: 'We shall suffer your presence, just effect your economic miracle real fast!' It is no wonder that unsuspecting immigrants are confused, floundering. It is no surprise that discerning would-be migrants are staying away.

'If you want the truth,' says Maged, 'I think that the Government wants our children, they do not want us. The children can be cloned like other New Zealanders.'

HOWARD DAVIES / PANOS PICTURES

Despite the Government's gung-ho enthusiasm for professional Asian immigration, most New Zealanders do not consider themselves part of Asia. Acceptance as a South Pacific nation has been slow and that's about as internationalist as many New Zealanders want to become.

'Maybe those who still have a vision that New Zealand should be the "Better Britain" of the South Pacific can rejoice. How long can we afford to live in a time-warped fortress, ignoring our geopolitical reality?' asks Manying.

In April of this year it was announced that new immigrants would not be eligible for social-service benefits until they had been in the country for two years. Despite compelling evidence, the Government continues to bring skilled migrants into the country, fails to support or endorse their qualifications and then punishes them when they cannot find work.

For Manel and Maged this has been a disaster. Manel argues: 'I felt strongly that given the points system, Maged would be in a good position. But after 75 job refusals, we have become numb. It seems impossible to get work in your own field here. If the country does not need us, then why did the Government invite us here, why?' ■

Penny Hartill is a journalist and the Public Relations Manager for the Refugee and Migrant Service in Wellington.

PHILIP WOLMUTH / PANOS PICTURES

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1 First steps

Homo Erectus was the first human to set foot outside Africa, about one-and-a-half million years ago. Because they discovered how to use fire, these people could move north and live in Europe's colder climate. But it was Homo Sapiens, the first fully modern human, who really kicked off global migration around 50,000 years ago.

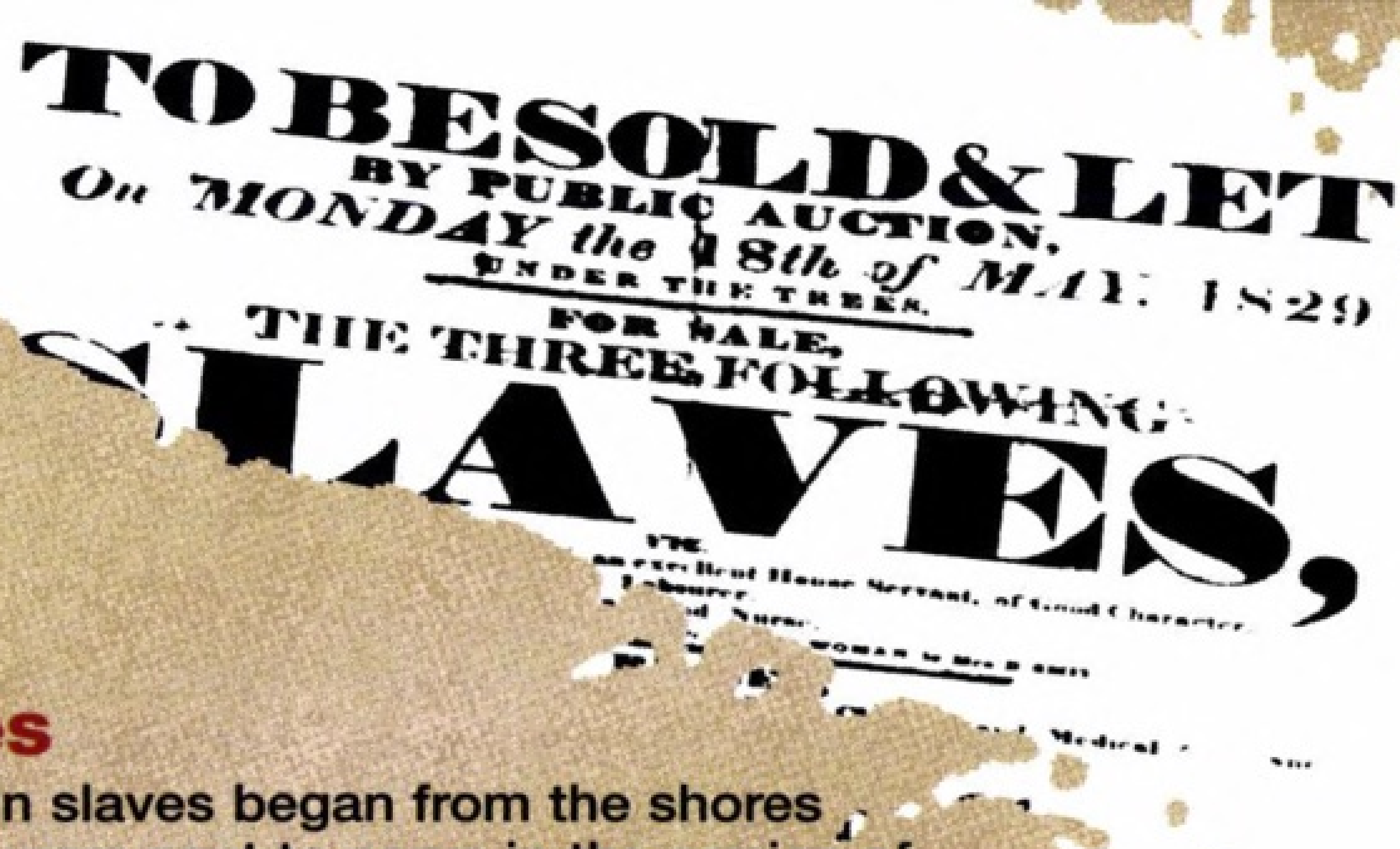
Homo Sapiens' lives were dictated by the movement of ice sheets. In periods of intense cold, water would freeze at the poles and sea levels would lower to reveal land between the continents. Australia and Papua New Guinea formed one territory which was linked with the Philippines and Indonesia. Using boats, people crossed these waters more than 40,000 years ago from mainland South East Asia to become the first inhabitants of Australia. Another land-bridge from Korea allowed the colonization of Japan. Further north, East Asia was joined to Alaska. Hot on the heels of animal herds – such as giant bison, horses, sloths, moose, large cats and mammoths – humans crossed over from Eurasia to America. Within a few thousand years, they had travelled from the top of North America to the southern tip of Chile.

By the end of the the Ice Age, 12,000 years ago, humans had migrated further than any other animal ever known.[1]

2 Itchy feet

Greed and desire spurred leaders and merchants to travel far from their homelands. The Greeks, Romans and Indians were among the first to create vast empires, stretching over sea and land. Merchants used the power of the empire to take from, or trade with, all parts of the world, spreading Christianity and Islam along the way. Traders from the Bismarck Archipelago, New Guinea, started sailing around the Pacific in 1700 BC in search of untapped resources. Polynesians arrived in small sea-craft in Aotearoa/New Zealand, 700 years later, in the last stage of long and dangerous Pacific Ocean voyages.[2]

Once the Portuguese arrived in the Indian Ocean in 1498, they dominated trade and migration. In 1500 they demanded that the ruler of Calicut, the main spice market, expel all Muslims and allow the Portuguese to seize ships and goods found at sea. They then captured Mozambique, Goa, Malacca and Hormuz. They took Brazil and had a base in China.[2] The Spanish also pursued their aspirations through the conquest of the Philippines. By the 1560s Spain had established itself in Mexico, Peru and Chile.[1]



TO BE SOLD & LET
BY PUBLIC AUCTION,
On MONDAY the 18th of MAY 1829
UNDER THE TREES.
FOR SALE,
THE THREE FOLLOWING
SLAVES,

3 Shuffling soles

The international trade in slaves began from the shores of the Black Sea. Men were sent to serve in the armies of Egyptian sultans, and women – especially blonde Circassians – were dispatched into domestic service or prostitution in Muslim and Christian areas of the West. In the 1440s Portuguese sailors began to bring African slaves back to Europe.

Around 15 million people were taken from Africa as slaves and shipped to Europe, Brazil, the Caribbean and North America. Most were gathered from the 20 principal slave markets dotted along the western coastline from Senegal in the north to Angola in the south. Today an estimated 40 million people in North and South America and the Caribbean are descended from those slaves.[3]

4 Down at heel

Industrialization and competition from the colonies reduced jobs available while Europe's population continued to grow. From 1846 to 1939 around 59 million people left Europe. Their destinations were: US 38 million, Canada 7 million, Argentina 7 million, Brazil 4.6 million and 2.5 million to Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand and South Africa. British or Irish emigrants travelled to colonial countries, the Spanish went to Argentina and the Portuguese to Brazil. But people from all emigrant countries headed to the US – 18 million people became new US citizens between 1890 and 1920.[4]

Many people from Southern colonies became indentured workers – they laboured under fixed contracts with conditions little better than slavery. From 1830 onwards at least 12 million and possibly more than 37 million people were dispatched to the British, French, Dutch and German colonies. China was the largest source of these workers – in 1900 around 30,000 'coolies' as they were known, were found in mines in one district of Borneo, South East Asia, alone.

In the South Pacific agents known as 'blackbirders' used deceit and violence to recruit men for work. Around 280,000 Melanesians and Micronesians became *kanakas*, workers exported to countries in the region. Conditions for indentured workers were harsh – 8.5 per cent of all Indian workers who arrived in Jamaica in 1869 died within a year.[3]

5 Goose-stepping

Before the First World War migrants seldom had to jump hurdles to get over national borders – people were free to travel through Europe and sometimes overseas without a passport.

But as xenophobia and then war broke out, control of migrants was seen as essential to preserve the 'character'of Western nations. Many countries became opposed to an increase in the number or diversity of immigrants – some on openly racist grounds, such as Hitler's Germany. In Britain, where 120,000 Jews settled between 1875 and 1914, Jewish migrants became the focus of racist marches which led to the restrictive Aliens Act of 1914.[5] Countries considered immigrant-friendly also succumbed to this pressure – the United States banned Chinese and Japanese workers and the racist Klu Klux Klan became popular by promising to stamp out Catholics, Jews and immigrants. Migration slowed substantially in both the US and Australia during the years between the World Wars.[3]

6 Treading gently

After the horrors of war, human rights (including the rights of refugees and migrants) became a potent international issue. But the principle of national control and manipulation of immigration had gained ground. Rich countries feared a stampede and remained closed to migrants.

The formation of new countries after the Second World War shifted people as well as borderlines – the partition of India and Pakistan involved the movement of 14 million people and the establishment of a Jewish homeland in the Middle East displaced 780,000 Palestinians.[4]

After the mid-1950s governments realized that to spur economic growth they would need cheap workers. South Africa recruited many temporary labourers from countries in the region.[3] The oil-producing states of Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Libya were destinations for many contract workers from nearby Asian and Arab countries. Germany was one of the European states which used a guestworker program – the government developed migrant-labour agreements which allowed in workers on a temporary basis.

Other countries sought permanent immigrants to kick-start the economy. Australia actively recruited European settlers and received over two million immigrants between 1945 and 1964.[4]

Migration

*A **journey** through **time***

7 Booted out

As governments became obsessed with economics, migrants became increasingly valued in terms of their monetary worth. Competition for jobs in the most-developed countries increased after the 1970s and immigration declined. The tables were turned when countries which had been traditional sources of emigrants – such as Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal – became the destinations for immigrant workers from other European and North African states in the 1980s.

The Cold War also affected governments' stance on immigration. The Soviet Union restricted emigration, while those who left the USSR were easily admitted as refugees to the US and other Western countries.

In the 1990s Europe tightened its borders. Ethnocentric and racist right-wing politics rose once again in this region and in other parts of the world.[5] Ethnic minorities became scapegoats for national social and economic problems and potential migrants were stopped in their tracks.

Today while money and goods flow freely, people cannot. But people have moved since the beginning of time. And the pressures to move – poverty and inequality – are still alive and kicking.

1 Gregory Parker (ed), *The World: An Illustrated History* (Times Books/Channel Four, 1986). **2** Jerome Burne (ed), *Chronicle of the World* (Longman, 1989). **3** Peter Stalker, *The Work of Strangers: A survey of international migration* (International Labour Organization, 1994). **4** International Organization for Migration website http://www.iom.ch/. **5** Susan Greenberg (ed), *Mindfield: Hate Thy Neighbour; the dividing lines of race and culture* (Camden Press, 1998).

Photos: (Top left) HUBERT / KLEIN / STILL PICTURES; (Bottom left) JEAN-LEO DUGAST / PANOS PICTURES.

Turning the tide

While xenophobia and anti-immigrant politics threaten to flood Europe, **Ali Qassim** finds hope for a brighter future in Spain.

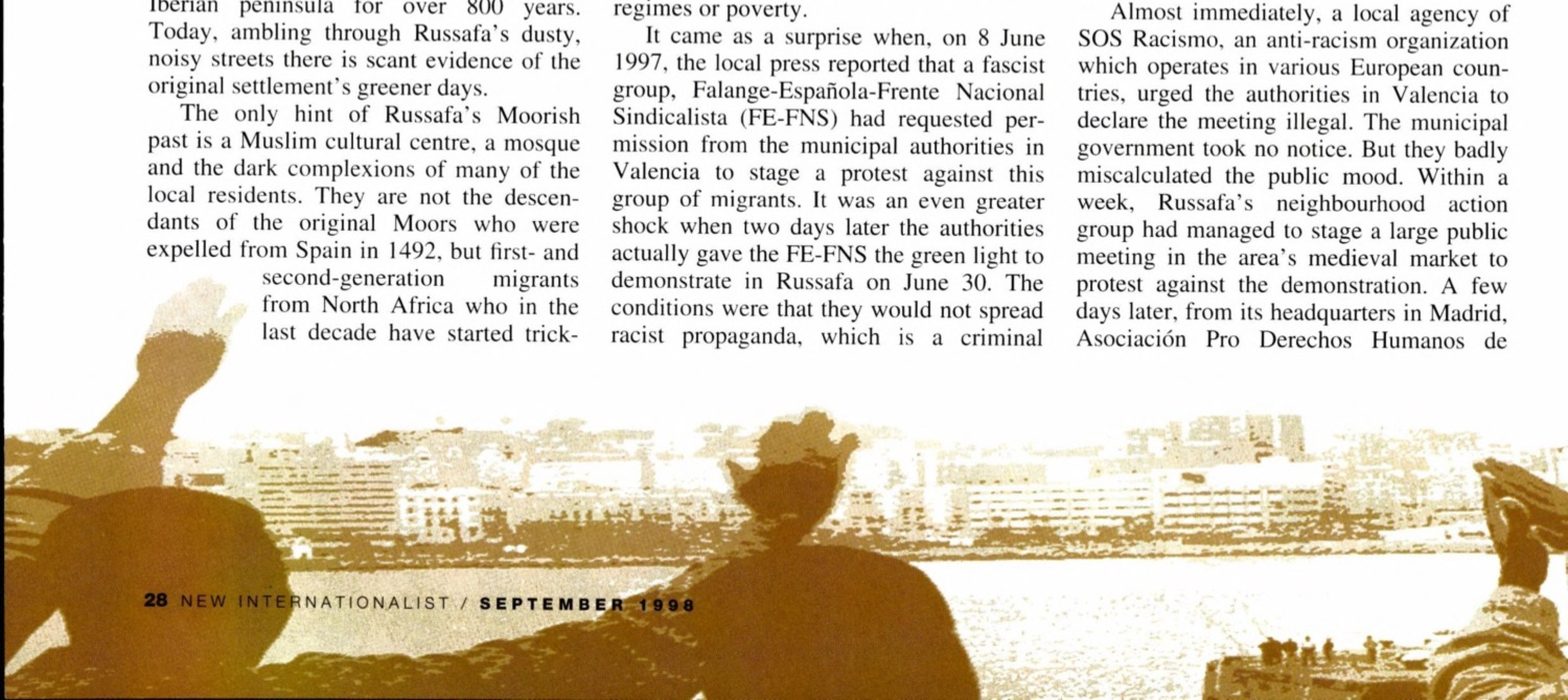
SANDY beaches, paella and fireworks displays. For decades, these have brought nationwide fame to Valencia, the capital of Spain's Mediterranean *Costa Blanca* ('White Coast'). But last year the country's third-largest city gained a new, more sinister notoriety – an extreme right-wing group attempted to stage the first public anti-immigrant demonstration since the death of Fascist leader General Franco in 1975.

For an entire month, the attention of the local media and of human-rights organizations throughout the country was focused on Russafa, a working-class neighbourhood in Valencia. Russafa means 'garden' in Arabic. The name was given by the Moors (North African Arabs) who controlled much of the southern and central Iberian peninsula for over 800 years. Today, ambling through Russafa's dusty, noisy streets there is scant evidence of the original settlement's greener days.

The only hint of Russafa's Moorish past is a Muslim cultural centre, a mosque and the dark complexions of many of the local residents. They are not the descendants of the original Moors who were expelled from Spain in 1492, but first- and second-generation migrants from North Africa who in the last decade have started trickling into Spain to escape repressive regimes or poverty.

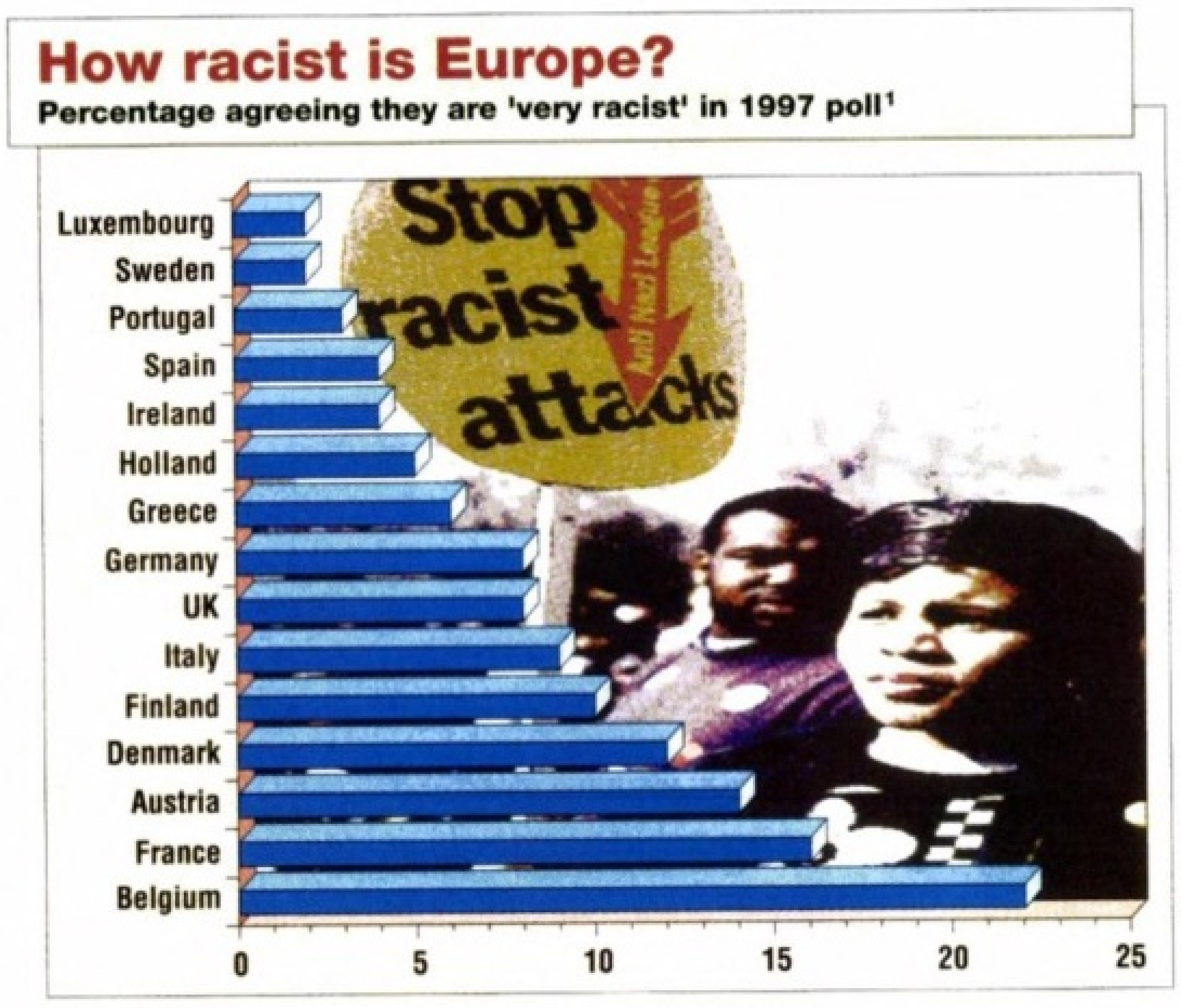
It came as a surprise when, on 8 June 1997, the local press reported that a fascist group, Falange-Española-Frente Nacional Sindicalista (FE-FNS) had requested permission from the municipal authorities in Valencia to stage a protest against this group of migrants. It was an even greater shock when two days later the authorities actually gave the FE-FNS the green light to demonstrate in Russafa on June 30. The conditions were that they would not spread racist propaganda, which is a criminal offence in Spain.

Almost immediately, a local agency of SOS Racismo, an anti-racism organization which operates in various European countries, urged the authorities in Valencia to declare the meeting illegal. The municipal government took no notice. But they badly miscalculated the public mood. Within a week, Russafa's neighbourhood action group had managed to stage a large public meeting in the area's medieval market to protest against the demonstration. A few days later, from its headquarters in Madrid, Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de



Breaking the barriers – Spanish people won't tolerate fascism.

BELOW: STEPHEN DUPONT / PANOS PICTURES

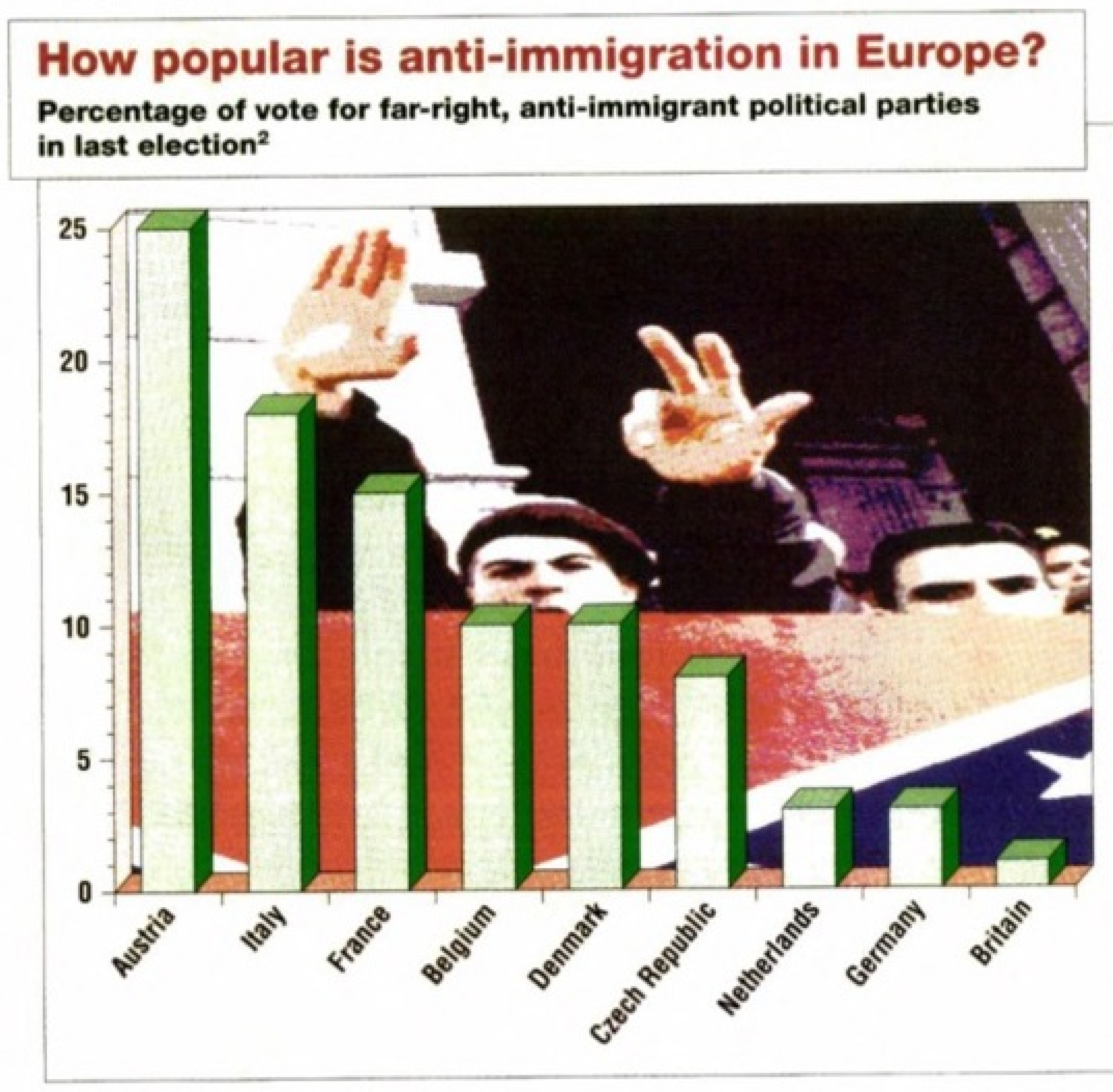


How racist is Europe?

Percentage agreeing they are 'very racist' in 1997 poll[1]

1 *The Guardian* Saturday 20 December 1997.

PHILIP WOLMUTH / PANOS PICTURES



How popular is anti-immigration in Europe?

Percentage of vote for far-right, anti-immigrant political parties in last election[2]

2 *The Economist* 2 May 1998.

S RUBIN / JB PICTURES / NETWORK

España, a leading human-rights group, voiced its opposition to the planned meeting. Like an ever-growing snowball, the chorus of objections from far-flung corners of Spain – including regional political parties, youth groups and local human-rights groups – became louder and louder.

When the day of the demonstration finally arrived, FE-FNS had managed to round up 120 supporters in Russafa. But they were completely outnumbered – anti-fascist demonstrators had ten times as many supporters. Spain's first anti-immigration demonstration had failed. SOS Racismo called for the resignation of the authorities in Valencia for having approved the anti-immigration protest in the first place.

Russafa is only a first test-case in Spain. There is nothing to prevent minority fascist groups from staging bigger, more organized and unauthorized protests in the future to spread their anti-immigration messages. It is debatable whether in such future scenarios, human-rights organizations and neighbourhood groups will be capable of drumming up the scale of fervour and support that was possible in Russafa.

But it is tempting, given the burgeoning support for anti-immigration movements in many other European countries, to suggest from the Russafa experience that racial problems could be less acute in Spain than elsewhere.

'There are several examples of racist actions in Spain during the last year which have been met with appropriate community responses,' says John Casey, a consultant at SOS Racismo in Barcelona, located four hours' drive north of Valencia. 'Spain does enjoy a relatively high tolerance level towards migrants.'

Casey's judgement is supported by the latest available findings on attitudes towards migrants. Research found that while racism does exist, particularly against gypsies, the number of people who believe that migrants should have greater political rights has risen steadily between 1991 and 1995.

Why do Spaniards seem relatively accommodating towards migrants? The reductionist and more cynical school of thought argues that the majority of Spaniards are not preoccupied with immigration issues simply because they are not faced with migrants in their daily lives unless they live in the poorer districts of major cities, or in rural areas on the southern coast closest to North Africa.

Spain's migrant population represents, at least officially, about 1.5 per cent of the population – less than half the average in the European Union. Of this group, the percentage who are of non-European stock (from the Caribbean, Africa or Asia) is only 0.7 per cent. Research on the experience of other European countries suggests that the indigenous population remains relatively tolerant of a racially different, migrant population when this group represents less than seven per cent of the total population. Many countries in Europe have passed this threshold but Spain has a long way to go yet.

At the same time, there are a large number of Spaniards, says Casey: 'who themselves have moved to other countries as emigrants and know what it is like to be at the receiving end of discrimination.' Between 1961 and 1973, when Spain's closed economy lagged behind many of its West European counterparts, the authorities actively encouraged around one million Spaniards to work abroad. By the mid-1970s, there were over 620,000 Spaniards in France, 270,000 in West Germany, 136,000 in Switzerland, 78,000 in Belgium, 40,000 in Britain and 33,000 in Holland. This was far larger than the number of non-European migrants in Spain today.

This still only goes some way to explaining the phenomenon in Spain. Italy, for instance, is also a nation of emigrants. Even today, more people leave than enter the country. And yet the anti-immigration movement is far more advanced there, in the shape of Gianfranco's National Alliance Party and the Milan-based Northern League.

The legacy of General Franco, who ruled Spain for over 40 years, cannot be underestimated, explains Isidoro Barba, a spokesperson for SOS Racismo. Ever since Franco's death, subsequent democratic governments have tried to shake off the country's long fascist past. The upshot is that extreme right-wing movements, which are most prone to hostile attitudes towards a multiracial society, have kept a far lower profile than their European counterparts (see graphic). 'Spain's old fascist guard knew they could achieve nothing through the ballot box,' says Barba, 'so they went underground to wait for a more appropriate moment.'

That time may come sooner than expected, warn human-rights organizations. 'Our investigations suggest that a new generation of extremists could resurface in Spain, boosted by the strengthening of the organized right in Europe. There are at least 40 different neo-Nazi extremist groups in Spain today,' says Esteban Ibarra, President of Youth Against Intolerance, an anti-racist organization that

Ever since Franco's death, Spain has tried to shake off its fascist past

Hope on the horizon – Spain's multilingual youth embrace diversity.

GIDEON MENDEL / NETWORK

provides legal counselling to victims of racist attacks.

While unable to match the organization and size of similar movements in France and Italy, neo-Nazis are believed to be taking greater control of local skinhead groups. According to Ibarra, they receive guidance from groups abroad, mainly via the Internet. Detected fascist propaganda in Spain has come from sources as diverse as neo-Nazi groups in the US and South Africa's National Afrikaner Party.

In the same way that the Spanish authorities are grappling with how to confront the isolated outbreaks of neo-Nazi violence, they are confused on how to fulfil their roles as European Union (EU) immigration watchdogs, particularly as they have no past experience to fall back on. The EU is not offering much help either. The first EU-Southern Mediterranean Pact, which included North Africa and was signed in Barcelona in December 1996, set an agenda for a free-trade zone but relegated the immigration question to an appendix.

Meanwhile, all the signs point to a growing tide of immigration, albeit illegal, say European sociologists. With North Africa facing an increasing young population and grim economic prospects, African immigration to Southern Europe is forecast to surpass recent immigration waves from Turkey and Eastern Europe.

Every year, especially in the warmest summer months, up to 5,000 illegal migrants, mostly men between the age of 18 and 40, are attempting clandestine and dangerous crossings across the Gibraltar Straits into Spain, according to the Employment Ministry. The cities most affected by this growing number of hopeful migrants have been Ceuta and Melilla, Spanish enclaves in northern Morocco. People come from as far away as Rwanda, Senegal and Somalia. 'We have become the waiting lounge for Spain and the rest of Europe,' says Rosa Rodriguez, coordinator of Spain's United Left party in Ceuta.

What the town fears is that the incoming traffic of migrants will lead to a repetition of the violent clash which took place between 300 migrants and the Spanish police towards the end of 1996. Describing the incident, one of the migrants, Daniel Yakam, a student from Cameroon, says: 'I was kicked in the shins and put in a prison. Some of my mates have still not appeared. There is talk of a few deaths.'

It is not difficult to see how such scenes could be reproduced on the mainland, in the event of a similar pile-up of illegal migrants in a confined area or town. Such a scenario would prove to be a real test of how Spanish society as a whole can deal with an increasingly multiracial society. This is particularly true while Spain continues to have the highest unemployment rate in the EU.

Despite the challenges, Mohammed Derdabi, President of the Barcelona division of Atime, Morocco's immigration association, is optimistic about the future. 'The Spanish authorities seem to be promoting a policy of integration.' The trade unions have also been relatively accepting of the growing number of migrants seeking formal jobs, albeit mostly of a low-paid, low-skilled nature.

Spain's regional diversity may also contribute to a continuing acceptance of migrants in the long-term, argues Casey of SOS Racismo. Although Franco imposed a centralist rule, the regions in Spain – especially the Basque country and Catalonia – are gaining increasing autonomy. Almost a quarter of Spain's inhabitants speak a vernacular language in addition to Castilian, the official language of the state. This percentage is likely to grow as local governments continue to push the learning of their regional languages in the school curriculum.

The single most decisive factor however, rests on a new immigration law which is being discussed in parliament. Atime's Beyuke Abdel Hamid explains that the existing immigration legislation was passed in 1985 when Spain was only beginning to witness the entry of migrants from Africa and the Caribbean.

The biggest change has been the growing need for cheap labour as, despite high unemployment, Spaniards are less and less willing to take on low-paid, unskilled jobs. Several political parties have called for substantial reforms, including issuing more work permits to stabilize the situation of migrants who may have been working in Spain for over a decade. SOS Racismo claims that the government needs to issue 35,000 new working visas, in addition to the 25,000 issued last year. The rules need to be more clearly defined, says Hamid.

The ongoing debate in Parliament about the exact content of the immigration reforms makes Casey more cautious about the final outcome. But he adds: 'If the worst thing that can be said right now about Spain's immigration problem is that the country doesn't have a good immigration policy, instead of other kinds of immigration-related problems, then in many ways the situation could be much worse.'

Spain can create a fair policy, says Mohammed Derdabi: 'I am very optimistic that Spain will come up with a positive model.' ■

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PHILIP WOLMUTH / PANOS PICTURES

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The **NI** Interview

Asaf Durakovic

Felicity Arbuthnot meets a respected scientist fighting on behalf of American Gulf War veterans.

PROFESSOR ASAF DURAKOVIC snaps to his feet as I enter the room. He towers grey-haired with the permanent tan of a fit, outdoor enthusiast and has the military bearing and formal courtesy of another age. When he speaks it's with the confidence of an experienced scientist, which is what he is – a world-renowned expert on radiation and nuclear medicine. He is currently Clinical Professor of Radiology and Nuclear Medicine at Georgetown University in Washington. And he has written more than a hundred books and academic papers on all aspects of radiation.

Brick walls: Dr Durakovic is taking on the US establishment.

COURTESY OF FELICITY ARBUTHNOT

But it's not his academic work Dr Durakovic wants to talk about. No, he has something more pressing on his mind and he is visibly angry.

He tells me he has patients who are dying from the effects of radioactive depleted uranium (DU) to which they were exposed in the 1990 Gulf War. He is angry that US troops and their allies were unaware of the potentially deadly fallout – from their own weapons. And he is outraged that the entire population of the Middle East was put at risk. But more than that, he is furious at the lack of response from President Clinton to his demands that the health concerns of Gulf War veterans be investigated – and alarmed that depleted uranium weapons are still being tested in Scotland and throughout the US.

The Gulf War was a testing ground for new weapons systems, including the use of depleted uranium. This waste from the nuclear industry has replaced titanium as the hard armour-piercing plating for missiles, shells and bullets. For arms manufacturers it has the great advantage of being cheap – since the nuclear industry needs to dispose of it anyway. On impact an exploding weapon leaves a plume of radioactive dust to travel where the wind blows. The dust (which remains radioactive for 4,500 million years) is inhaled and absorbed into the gastro-intestinal tract. It also penetrates the soil and eventually passes into vegetables, fruits, plants and livestock.

> ***The Gulf War was a testing ground for new weapons systems including the use of depleted uranium***

Dr Durakovic served as Chief of Professional Clinical Services of the 531 Medical Detachment during the Desert Shield phase of the Gulf War. Yet at the time he knew nothing of the DU-coated US weapons. Later, 24 soldiers were referred to him for examination. 'They had been based in Saudi Arabia from January to August 1991, working with damaged tanks hit by DU armour-piercing shells from "friendly fire". Soldiers trained in these tanks, lived near them, ate lunch in them and cooled themselves in them.'

In March of that same year a Battle Damage Assessment Team arrived from Washington. 'They were suited up in full radio-protective clothing,' Durakovic recalls. 'The tanks were so contaminated they were painted with the atomic symbol and removed from human contact.'

After tests Dr Durakovic found decay products of DU in 14 of the 24 patients. 'I only discovered indirectly in September 1991 that depleted uranium had been used on the battlefield. I was horrified. When scientists conduct experiments using this material, we dress like astronauts. Our soldiers had no protection. And this attack could have potentially exposed the entire population of the Gulf region. Soil samples from Iraq show radiation levels more than 17 times the acceptable level.'

Dr Durakovic began to campaign on behalf of his patients but soon ran into a brick wall. No-one wanted to listen to his story. The records and lab samples of his patients were repeatedly lost. The two doctors who did the tests were fired. His car was sabotaged on two occasions and he began to receive anonymous threats.

Was there a reason officials didn't want information on DU victims of the Gulf War to become public? According to Dr Durakovic there are two main reasons – and they both involve money. By the year 2000 the bill to clean up waste uranium from the US nuclear industry would have amounted to more than $200 billion. So a lot of cash could be saved if the uranium was recycled in the arms industry. And of course there is the issue of compensation. The US Government would have to pay out billions if it could be conclusively proven that DU-coated weapons were causing illness in returned American troops.

But money seems a petty concern when we are talking about changes to the human gene pool. 'Deformities among children born to Gulf War vets are well-documented as is the rising incidence of birth malformations in Iraq,' Dr Durakovic stresses. 'What will happen in future generations? I have seen the effects of radiation worldwide. The consequences of DU are immeasurable.'

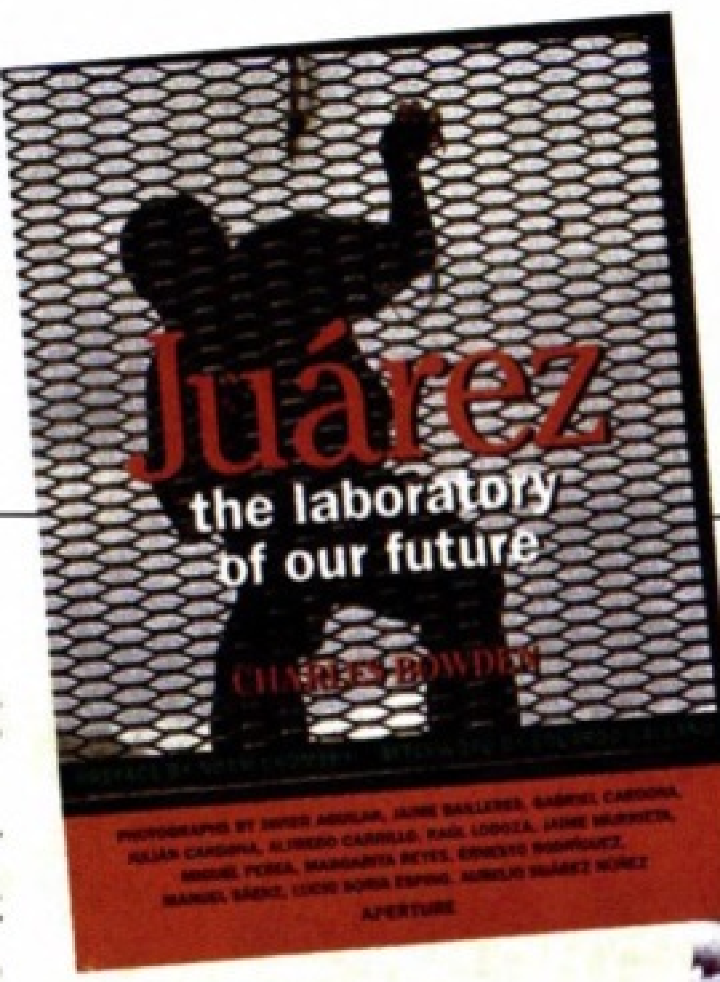
In February 1997 an exasperated Durakovic wrote to President Clinton on behalf of Gulf War veterans asking for an inquiry into DU contamination. Two months later he was fired from his job as Chief of Nuclear Medicine at the Department of Nuclear Medicine at the Veteran's Administration Authority in Wilmington, Delaware. Two of Durakovic's original 24 patients are now dead and 12 more are seriously ill. He warns that as many as 80,000 US soldiers may have been contaminated with DU.

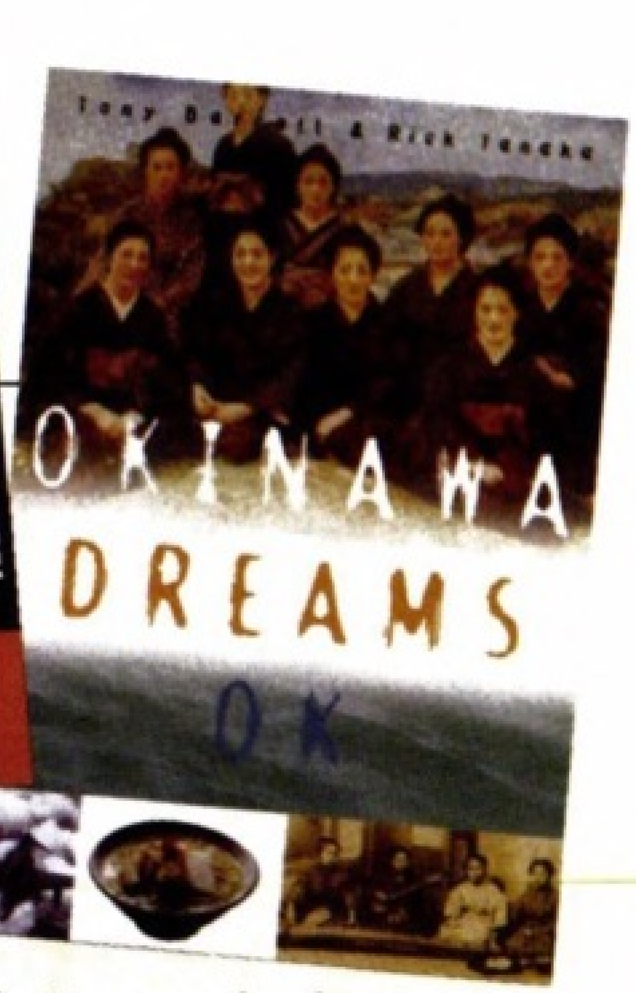
And it's not too late for Washington to act, says Durakovic. There are precedents. 'In Spain in 1968 there was an accident involving an American fighter plane contaminating tomato crops with radioactive plutonium. The area was decontaminated and the US paid compensation. In Tulla, Greenland, when an incident involving uranium occurred, the same action was taken. Wherever DU weapons have been used or tested, the Government must do the same thing. Otherwise cancer, necrosis and genetic deformity will be the price.'

This is the same message he gave to the Sub-Committee on Government Reform at the US House of Representatives in June 1997. To date he has received no replies. Nonetheless, Dr Durakovic believes DU weapons will be outlawed eventually. 'There is no choice,' he says. 'The threat to the human race is too great.' ■

Felicity Arbuthnot is a freelance journalist based in London.

Reviews





books

Juárez – the laboratory of our future

by **Charles Bowden**
(Aperture, New York, US
ISBN 0-89381-776-7)

Okinawa Dreams OK

by **Tony Barrett** and **Rick Tanaka**
(Private Guy International, Strawberry Hills, Australia ISBN 3-9311126-11-0)

Coffee-table books sell us the world as we would like it to be. **Juárez** shows us the world as it is – a terrifying vision, less willingly seen, that implies the two worlds are falling apart.

Two million people live in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, across the border from El Paso, Texas. They are, argues Charles Bowden, harbingers of a world devoted entirely to free enterprise.

There are over 400 gangs in the city. They kill at least 150 people every year. Wages in the export factories have fallen – from virtually nothing – by almost a half since 1994. At one time a certain Amado Carrillo Fuentes was moving an annual 100 tons of cocaine into El Paso and earning $200 million a week.

Jaime Murrieta has photographed over 500 murders. He is one of a band of 'street shooters' in Juárez whose best work is too frank for the local newspapers. A body hung from a pylon like a puppet, fried by the electrical power it tried to steal; a cayote – smuggler of migrants – caught by rigor mortis on the concrete slopes of the Rio Grande; the hollow mask of a girl raped, murdered and left to mummify in Friendship Park; the Queen of the Factory Olympics.

Charles Bowden writes: 'Snapshots make Juárez stand still. You can run from photographs but you can't really hide.'

Recycled Chomsky at the front and Galeano at the back can't add much to this stunning book. Nor, perhaps, can Bowden's inspired if meandering and slightly portentous prose. But then, what could?

Politics ☆☆☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆ DR

Somewhat gentler in its approach is **Okinawa Dreams OK**. Okinawa, the main island of the Ryukyu archipelago stretching south of Japan, was once an agricultural, fishing and trading island. It was 'administered' – in other words, occupied – by the US from 1945-1972, during which time military installations became the main business and employer. These islands may have hosted 40 US military bases, but their people have stubbornly clung to their own culture. The voices passionately recorded here are a collective prophesy of the superpower's retreat.

Local women's captivity to base culture and the omnipresence of military hardware are explored. But there are also less predictable items, such as the Okinawa origins of karate or the use of the island as a surreal film backdrop.

Those involved in radical politics and arts movements alike are engaged in the common cause of rescuing Okinawa from the US military and, to an extent, from control by Tokyo.

The book's final interview is with Ahagon Shoko – the 'Gandhi of Okinawa' – who has devoted half his life to non-violent struggle. He concludes: 'Some people criticize us for our opposition to the bases. There are others who are only interested in the pursuit of self-interest. Peace cannot be constructed by these people.'

Politics ☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆ SW

film

McLibel: Two Worlds Collide

directed by **Franny Armstrong**
(One–Off Productions video)

The Big One

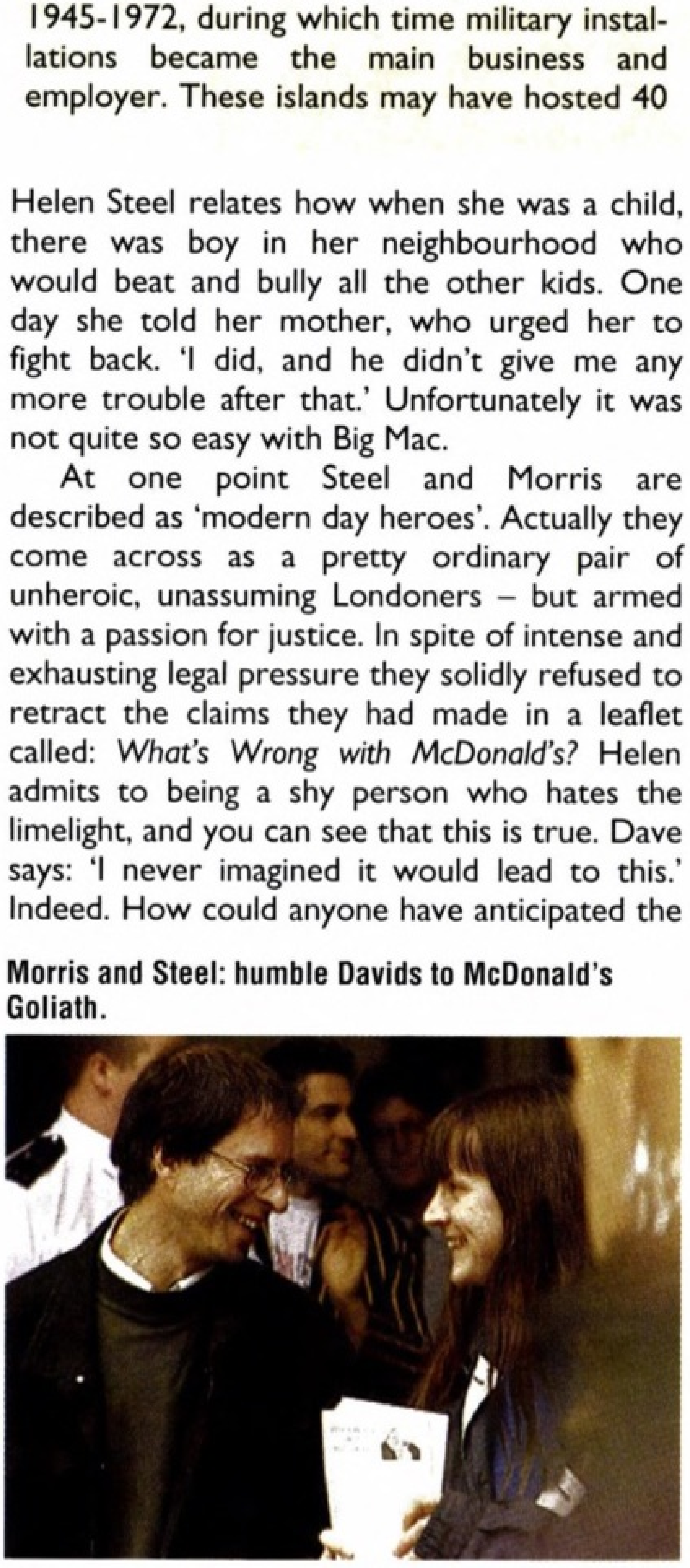
directed by **Michael Moore**
(distributed by Miramax)

The long arm of McDonald's seems to have no limit. Proposed transmissions of this excellent documentary on the libel case brought by the burger giant against two activists, ex-Post Office worker and single father Dave Morris and part-time bar worker Helen Steel, have been cancelled by both the BBC and Britain's Channel Four. Although there is nothing strictly libellous in Franny Armstrong's film, which consists of a dramatic reconstruction of the court case interlaced with interviews with the defendants, the stations have been threatened with legal action by McDonald's in the past and are keeping their heads down now.

More reason why **McLibel: Two Worlds Collide** should be shown as widely as possible. For it is precisely about how corporations like McDonald's can censor free speech unless we stand up to them. Early on in the documentary Helen Steel relates how when she was a child, there was boy in her neighbourhood who would beat and bully all the other kids. One day she told her mother, who urged her to fight back. 'I did, and he didn't give me any more trouble after that.' Unfortunately it was not quite so easy with Big Mac.

At one point Steel and Morris are described as 'modern day heroes'. Actually they come across as a pretty ordinary pair of unheroic, unassuming Londoners – but armed with a passion for justice. In spite of intense and exhausting legal pressure they solidly refused to retract the claims they had made in a leaflet called: *What's Wrong with McDonald's?* Helen admits to being a shy person who hates the limelight, and you can see that this is true. Dave says: 'I never imagined it would lead to this.' Indeed. How could anyone have anticipated the longest legal case in UK history with Steel and Morris defending themselves (they were refused legal aid) against a seven-strong team of McDonald's lawyers. And still they managed to outwit the professionals at times.

Morris and Steel: humble Davids to McDonald's Goliath.



Half of Steel and Morris's claims against McDonald's were upheld by the judge. Yes, the company exploited and manipulated children through their advertising. Yes, they were culpably responsible for cruelty to animals. Yes, they deceptively advertised their food as nutritious and paid their workers low wages. McDonald's claimed a victory. Well, if you believe that, you'll believe that burgers are good for you. At the end of the film David Morris holds up a placard saying: 'Judge for yourselves'. If your TV channels let you. If they don't you can see this dramatic, inspiring, hard-hitting and heart-warming documentary on www.spanner org/mclibel/

The video can also be ordered (price £14.99) from BCM Oops, London WC1N 3XX. Tel/fax: (+44) 171 247 8881. e–mail: oops@spanner.org

Politics ☆☆☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆☆ VB

In **The Big One** corporate gadfly and veteran muckraker of greed, Michael Moore is at it again. This time Moore, of *Roger and Me* fame, broadens his scope to investigate the effects of corporate down-sizing throughout the United States. The goal, he says, is to find 'one corporate CEO with a conscience'.

Viewers who remember his earlier documentaries will know the dramatic set pieces by heart. Moore, with camera-crew, entering a corporate headquarters – always that glistening glass and steel – searching for an executive who will talk. Verbal jostling with security guards and PR specialists, the classic 'flak catchers' in action.

The film, and the book tour for Moore's *'Downsize This!: Random Threats From an Unarmed American'* takes him far off the beaten track for a typical publicity junket. It includes Centralia, Illinois, home of the Pay Day candy bar. 'Every Day is Pay Day.' shouts a sign outside the factory, but alas the plant is about to close. Next stop, Rockford, Illinois, a city now ranked economically as the 'worst in the USA'. Moore ends the sequence singing a sardonic version of Bob Dylan's 'The Times Are a Changing'.

Throughout his films Moore plays a consistent character – equal parts the muckraking journalist, the comic fat man, and the neatly clichéd US working-man of the checked shirt, baseball cap, plumber's-droop pants aesthetic. His meeting with the smooth, ultra-hip Phil Knight, Chair of Nike Corporation throws the two styles and the worlds they represent into fine contrast. It's the centre of the film. Knight doesn't hide from a showdown. He's either arrogant enough or clever enough to step into Moore's media machine and make his case – the CEO with a conscience.

Nike's cool Knight (left) faces muckraker Moore.

Moore's cross-country antics take centre stage in a way that threatens to turn the workers into background extras. And, as in his earlier work, Moore's good-old-boy humour occasionally picks unfortunate, easy targets. As for economic analysis, Moore often runs close to an 'America First' outlook, where the loss of jobs to foreign workers comprises the greatest sin of all.

Still, in this age of global downsizing, with US profits up 250 per cent since 1991, but millions living in poverty, nobody's playing the class clown in the mainstream like Moore.

Politics ☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆ PS

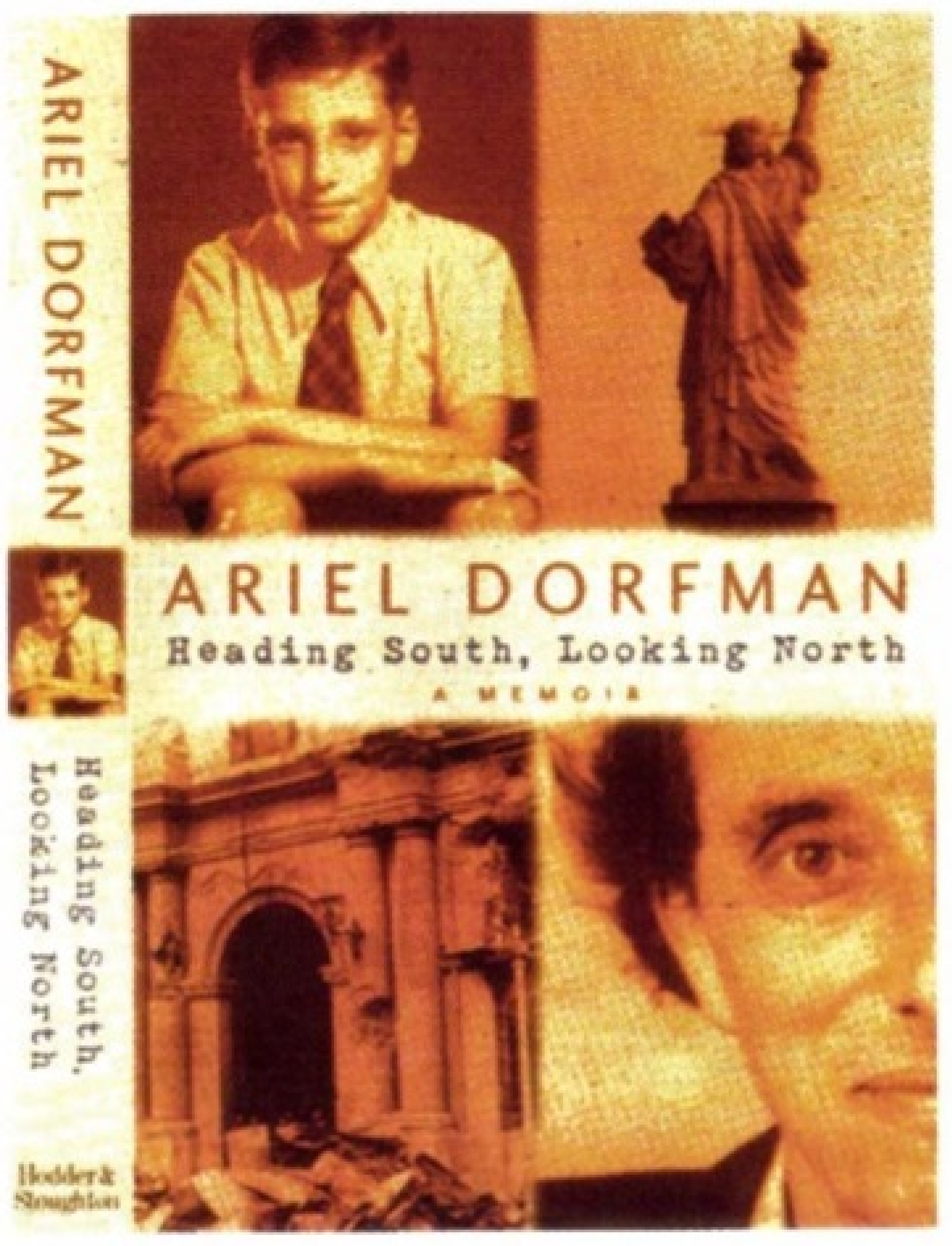
THE CLASSIC

Ariel Dorfman

...a man with a mission to speak for those who didn't get away.

'I SHOULD not be here to tell this story. It's that simple: there is a day in my past, a day many years ago in Santiago de Chile, when I should have died and did not.'

So begins Chilean writer Ariel Dorfman's luminous account of his life, **Heading South, Looking North**. Such an opening could be seen as melodramatic or self-dramatizing but in Dorfman's case it is no more than the simple truth. As a supporter of the Chilean President, Salvador Allende, Dorfman was due to work a shift at La Moneda, the Presidential residence on 11 September 1973.



For the most trivial of personal reasons, he swapped shifts with a co-worker and so was at home when the military under Augusto Pinochet launched its bloody coup against Allende's Government. Claudio Gimento, the person with whom he swapped shifts was captured, tortured and murdered. Small wonder that Dorfman, in his novels, plays, stories and essays, has felt an obligation to bear witness, to 'keep a promise to the dead' and speak for all those who failed to escape torture and death. Ariel Dorfman's fascinating life history has resonances far beyond the particular and the personal.

His experiences stand as emblematic of our troubled, dislocated closing half-century. How this son of Argentinean leftists came to be one of the militants of the noble Chilean attempt at a non-violent, democratic revolution is a tale of exile and loss but also of belonging and hope. His grandparents were part of the Jewish diaspora; escaping Russian pogroms in the early years of the century, they settled in Argentina, only for his parents to be forced to flee to the US when the military took over in 1943. The pattern of displacements continued when the family was caught up in the McCarthyite 'Red Scare' of the early 1950s and had to uproot yet again, this time to Chile. Finally, Ariel himself had to flee Pinochet's troops and go into exile, just as his parents and grandparents had done.

Drawing on his experience of this enforced nomadic life, Dorfman has built a body of work in which there is a constant dialogue between attachment to place and loyalty to people. His early years in the US and his adolescence in Chile meant that not only did he grow up bilingual in Spanish and English but that he also had a grandstand view of the rich world/poor world power struggle. His meditations on this conflict have led to his radical and innovative work on language and culture such as the groundbreaking anti-colonial classics **How to Read Donald Duck** (copies of which were publicly burned by the military after the coup) and **The Empire's Old Clothes** with its splendidly explanatory sub-title, 'What the Lone Ranger, Babar and other Innocent Heroes do to our minds'!

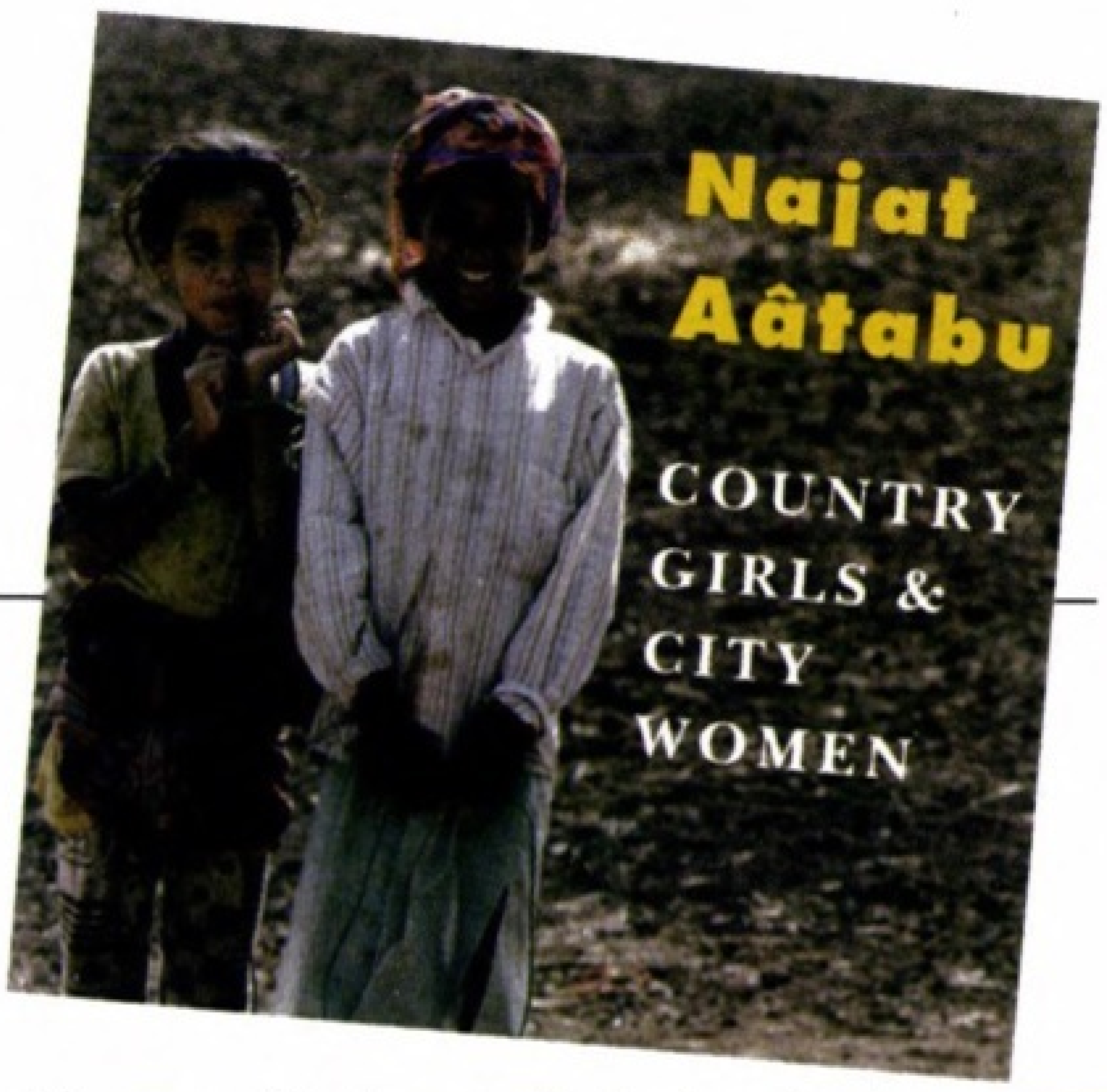
Dorfman's peripatetic life is mirrored in a willingness to cross boundaries in his writing; **Widows** started life as a poem then became a novel before finding its finished form in the theatre. Arguably, Dorfman's best and most powerful work is for the stage. His most famous play is **Death and the Maiden**, in which we share the dilemma of Paulina Salas, finally presented with the opportunity to confront and interrogate the man she believes tortured her many years before. The themes of revenge and reconciliation, justice and healing are presented to us not as stark choices but as central to the dilemma of what makes us human. As Paulina asks her vacillating husband at the end of the play, 'Why does it always have to be people like me who have to sacrifice? Why are we always the ones who have to make concessions when something has to be conceded? Why always me who has to bite her tongue, why?... What do we lose by killing one of them?'

Paulina, in her struggle with the self-protective amnesia of her society, is central to the writing of Ariel Dorfman. In all his work there is a bloody-minded refusal to let the past be buried, a burning need to prevent memories and ideals from being extinguished. In **Heading South, Looking North**, Dorfman speaks of meeting a victim of torture who kept her sanity by endlessly repeating some lines of verse by the poet Pablo Neruda, preserving inside herself a small zone which she could keep from the men who were making her suffer. It is for this woman and thousands like her that Ariel Dorfman argues the case that we have an 'obligation to remember'. In fulfilling his promise, in 'writing to the future', in singing of joy when despair would have been so easy, this expatriate son of exiles and refugees has made a vital contribution to the continuing literature of hope. ■

Peter Whittaker

Heading South, Looking North *(ISBN 0 340 71300 3)* is published by Hodder & Stoughton. **Widows** and **Death and the Maiden** form part of the volume, **The Resistance Trilogy** *(ISBN 1 85459 36 2)* published by Nick Hern Books.

Reviews



music

Country Girls and City Women

by **Najat Aâtabu** *(Rounder 5077 CD)*

The Legendary Fairuz

by **Fairuz** *(EMI Hemisphere 23572 CD)*

It's one of the great contradictions of our times that some of the most restrictive societies – especially as far as the status of women are concerned – have also given us some of the best women's music. In terms of the Muslim world, this is certainly so. Yet for all the lavish and impassioned richness that, say, Egypt's incomparable Oum Kalsoum or Lebanon's Fairuz possess, it's arguable that the push for change comes not from the metropolis but the countryside.

Hailed as the 'siren of the Atlas mountains', Najat Aâtabu overcame the displeasure of her appalled Berber family to become one of Morocco's greatest exponents of *chaabi* or 'popular' style. Aâtabu's records are compelling. Traditional Berber rhythms and instruments – foremost among them buzzing, sheepskin drums called *bendirs* and a swarm of frenetic violins and ouds – are fused with Aâtabu's pure and utterly direct voice. There's no doubt in **Country Girls and City Women** who's boss. But it's as a song-writer that she really hits home. The title to her second western release hints at what it contains: it examines the conservative belief that cities turn (good) girls into bad women. Through the medium of impassioned love songs, Aâtabu rips into not only feckless men, but weeping women too. 'Go find another lover, there's plenty of single guys out there...' she sings on 'Shoufi Ghirou', simultaneously beating off the competition and claiming the man herself. Her songs operate in a cultural minefield and are all the more delicious for their simple assertion: get a life! In addition to the unusual lyrics (translated into English), the fulsome sleeve notes offer an interview with the singer, tips on other discs, films and books about Morocco and some hot-looking recipes. All in all, **Country Girls and City Women** makes for a well-thought out package.

Politics ☆☆☆

Entertainment ☆☆☆☆ LG

A Beirut-born Christian, Fairuz has become synonymous with the cause of freedom – in this case, of Lebanon. Backed up by the sensual orchestral tones of the Rabhini Brothers, Fairuz resisted becoming the nationalistic rallying point that some tried to make her, concentrating her efforts on a more pan-Arab ideal – songs on **The Legendary Fairuz** refer to Beirut, Kuwait and Baghdad. Her significance for today lies in how she bridged a gap between traditions and opened up Arabic music to its own particular lingua franca. That she succeeded is evident in the influences that remain today.

Politics ☆☆

Entertainment ☆☆☆ LG

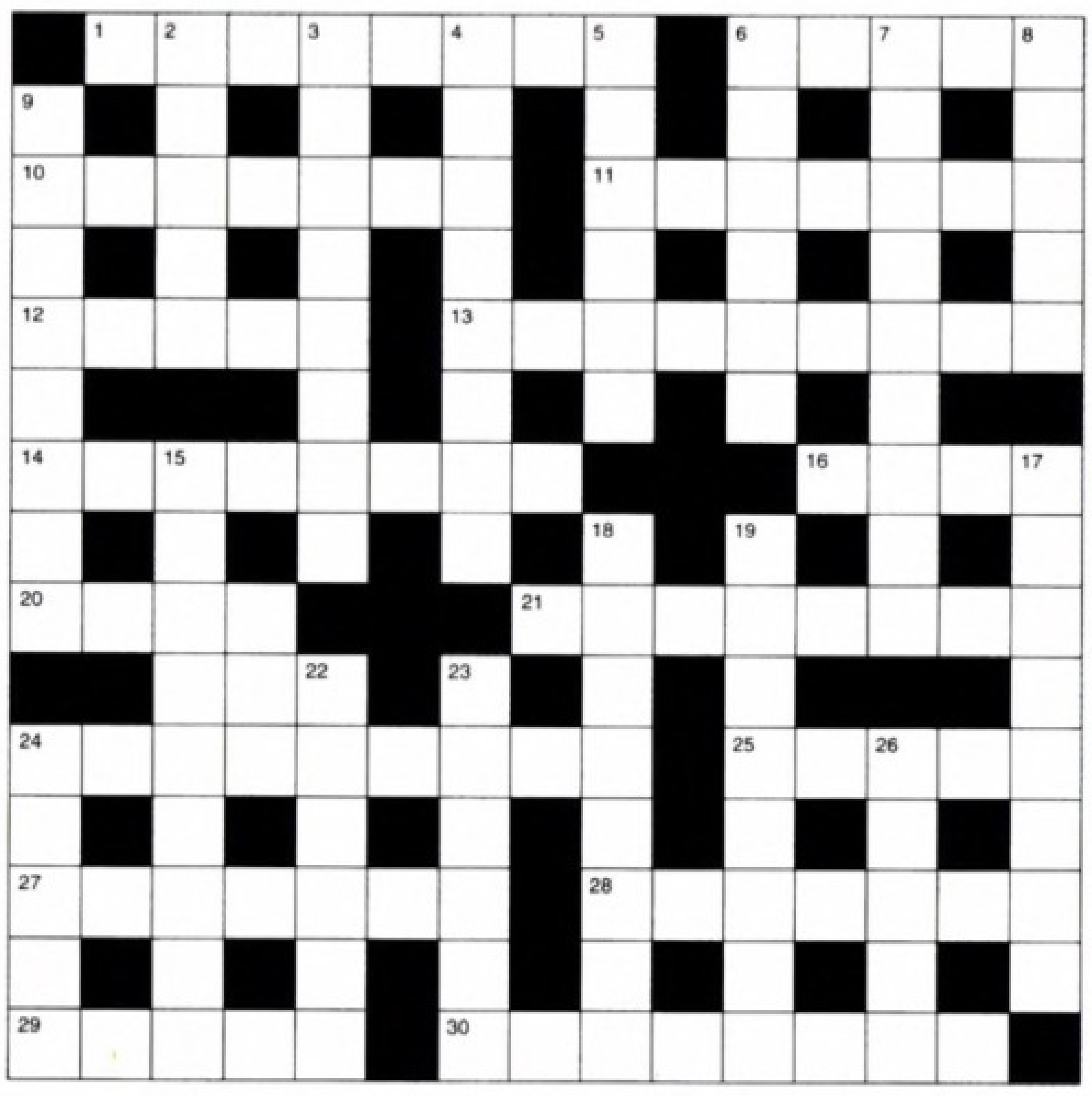
Reviewers: **Louise Gray, Stephen Webb, David Ransom, Peter Steven, Vanessa Baird.**
Reviews editor: **Vanessa Baird**

STAR RATING

Excellent	☆☆☆☆☆
Very good	☆☆☆☆
Good	☆☆☆
Fair	☆☆
Poor	☆

The **NI** Crossword

No. 25 by Axe



CRYPTIC

Across

1 18 always top of the class (8)
6 Letter from Greece looking into pollen-carrier and West African Flower (5)
10 Where art and, firstly, music have no-one in charge of retrospective? (7)
11 Kitty receives royal at top-notch retreat in the old country (7)
12 Spaniard out east discovers (for 17?) an Asian cat (5)
13 They cluster when about to re-decorate (3–6)
14 Final son makes an enemy of Peron (8)
16 Viking sliced bread! (4)
20 Division is leading senator... (4)
21 ...to machinate: he's building bridges? (8)
24 Recess, not one of 29, where the copper is divided up amongst various helpers (9)
25 Follower doesn't have the backward Biblical look of the Pied Piper! (5)
27 See 9
28 See 23
29 Bays if confined to close spaces in the rear (5)
30 Resort to a Saar relocation after Sedan initiative (8)

Down

2 Surinam map obtusely obscuring the position of capital (5)
3 Where one does 0 to 180, going back in time! (4-4)
4 Allies, inter alia, seen in Asia Minor (8)
5 Poe's hopeful that an interim pair of kings will produce the cash (6)
6 See 9
7 Article, in between, points to heroin situation at the French town, the country, and western city (9)
8 The Spanish asp – rare snake-type (5)
9,27,6d Shakespeare country, true blue, run without universally-accepted top Muslim's liberal leadership – taken to 21 (8,7,6)
15 Extremely dry types have effrontery to meet Imelda and Co. (9)
17 Stole truck? (3,5)
18 1's a consumer of relative matter, reportedly (8)
19 Badly mislead worker's leader somewhere between Britain's north-south divide (3–5)
22 Florida's always missing openings (6)
23,28 21 – he doubts whether car has allowed for turning overhead (6,7)
24 Siberian region reflected in Jeddah kasbah (5)
26 Explorer sees tax on travel initiative (5)

QUICK

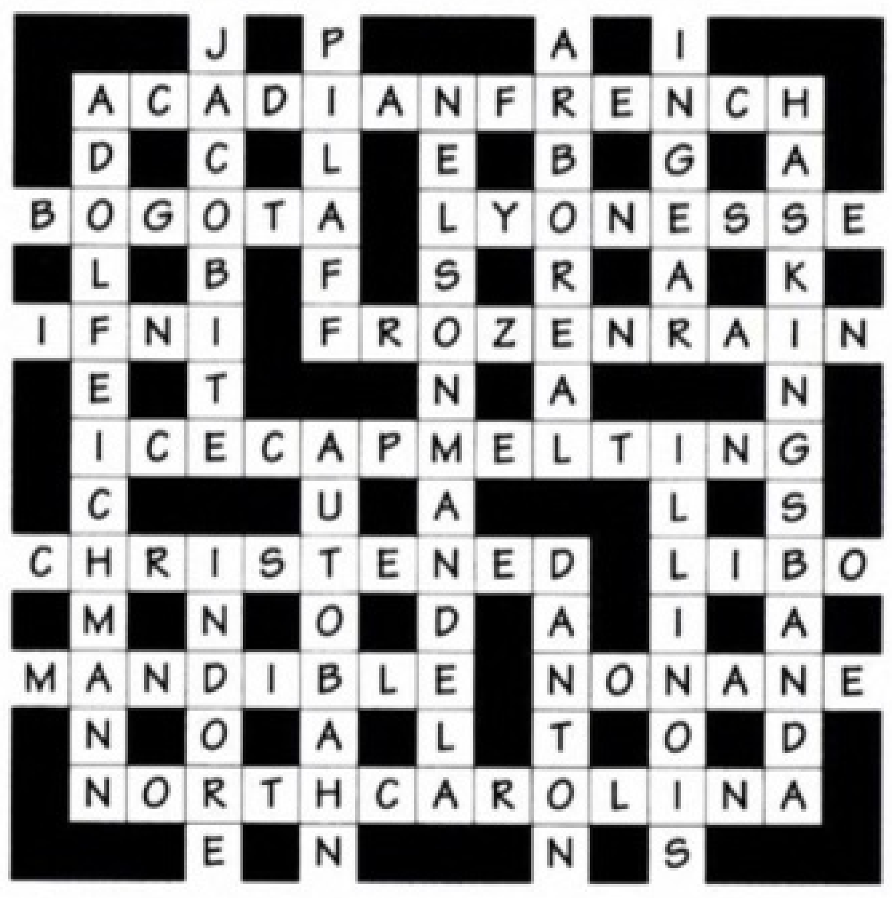
Across

1 Antbear indigenous to Africa (8)
6 Major river of West Africa – a tributary of the Niger (5)
10 World's sixth-largest island, set in the Indian Ocean (7)
11 Land on the Baltic, originally conquered by the Teutonic Knights in the thirteenth century (7)
12 Mongolian wildcat (5)
13 In clusters, they form additional military decorations (3–6)
14 President of Argentina, 1983-89 (8)
16 --- III, son of Harald Hadrada, both defeated by Harold II at Stamford Bridge, 1066 (4)
20 A small portion: colloquialism for state benefit (4)
21 Contriver, designer (8)
24 Tomb or an alcove set into the wall of a church (9)
25 River of Germany, meeting the North Sea near Bremerhaven (5)
27 See 9
28 See 23
29 Semi-circular recesses of a church or basilica (5)
30 Florida resort, on the Gulf coast (8)

Down

2 Middle-eastern capital – known as Philadelphia throughout the classical period (5)
3 It is deflected to the west between 50-60°N: to the east between 5-50°S (4–4)
4 The Turkish massif (8)
5 Items of currency in Russia (6)
6 See 9
7 Tennessee home of the Grand Ole Opry (9)
8 Genus of snake (US coral snake; African garter snake) (5)
9,27,6d Designer of the SS Great Western (1837) – the first steamship to cross the Atlantic (8,7,6)
15 Citizens of the country named after the King of Spain, following conquest in 1563 (9)
17 Animal rights groups are against this (3,5)
18 Generic term for 1 (8)
19 Remote part of western Great Britain (3–5)
22 Clearings, hollows (6)
23,28 Surveyor in charge of the Caledonian canal project, 1803–23 (6,7)
24 Official name of the Russian Republic of Yakutia, north-east Siberia (5)
26 Robert Falcon --- gave his name to the Polar Research Institute in Cambridge (5)

Last month's solution



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Horn of tragedy

Richard Swift is saddened, but not surprised, by the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

THE liberation struggle in the South that I have been closest to, and identified with most, is the Eritrean struggle for nationhood against the militaristic Dergue that held all of Ethiopia in the grip of terror. I visited the war zone when final victory was anything but certain and then returned to see the beautiful tree-lined boulevards of Asmara after victory had been achieved. I came to a have a deep admiration for the tenacity and courage of the Eritreans, their unboastful determination to have a country of their own. They kept me safe from the MiGs and showed me camaraderie and a courtesy that is rare indeed.

So it was with dismay, but not entirely with surprise, that I heard of renewed hostility – including aerial bombardments by both sides – between Eritrea and its one-time ally, the Tigrayan-led Government of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa. I remember crossing the border between Eritrea and Tigray near Adigrat, just six years ago now, with the border guards barely bothering to check papers. Now travel is unthinkable and bombs have fallen on the civilians of what must be one of the poorest places on the face of the earth.

> ***A military viewpoint has its raison d'être in 'enemies' – and the Horn of Africa has always had plenty of those***

My lack of surprise was rooted in a growing unease about the difficulties that both these societies are having in making the transition from the military command structures of an armed liberation struggle to an open and democratic civil society. Don't get me wrong. There has been much to admire on both sides of the border: the lack of the corruption that plagues sub-Saharan Africa for one thing; the determination to be self-reliant for another; the commitment to basic-needs development for the most easily marginalized of rural peoples for a third. But, increasingly, I have had a sense of unease about the continuing and almost obsessive secretiveness of both governments, the tendency to see any dissent as treasonous, the determination to control or at least keep under close surveillance any impulse towards self-rule in civil society.

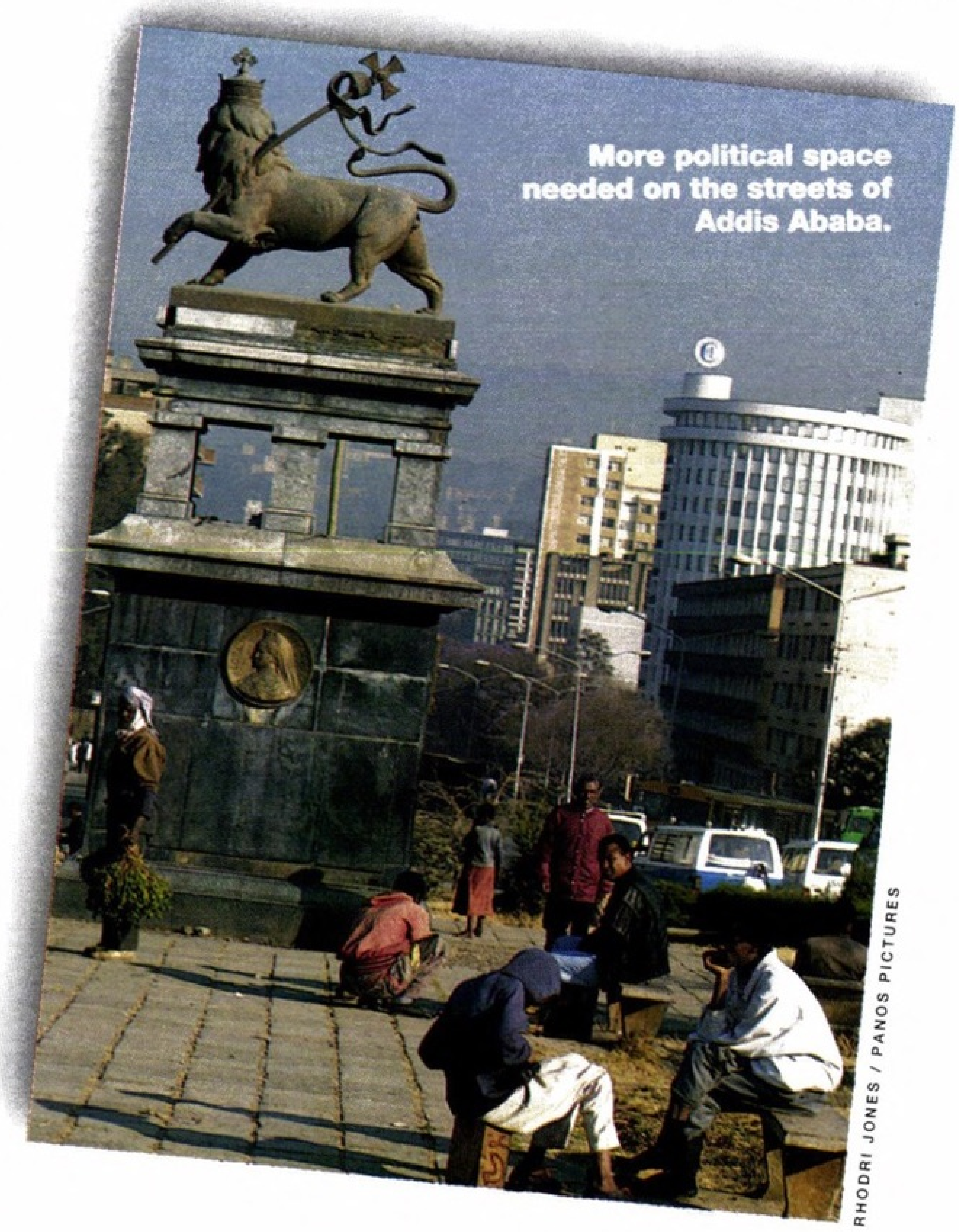
I sat for a longish time on the program committee for the Horn of Africa of Oxfam-Canada. Painstakingly we tried to shift our priorities in the post-liberation era from just supporting nuts-and-bolts rural-development projects carried out by large quasi-government organizations – like the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) or Relief Society of Tigray (REST) – to include the fledgling shoots of an emerging civil society: the village-based self-help organizations, the autonomous women's organizations, the human-rights centres, the independent voices on development issues in magazines or newsletters, the advocates of workers' rights. By and large they just weren't there.

If Ethiopia did slightly better than Eritrea in this regard one sensed that it wasn't out of conviction but rather because, to keep the lid on the cauldron of nationalities that is modern Ethiopia, one simply must provide more political space. On the other side of the coin, the internal methods of repression in Addis were much more severe than the Eritreans ever had to use. In Asmara, efforts to set up an independent human-rights centre or an independent press were nonetheless frustrated at every turn. Democracy in both places is a hemmed-in affair, in which only officially approved and ineffectual oppositions are tolerated. It became more and more difficult for international NGOs to operate, particularly in Eritrea, because officially they were regarded as sapping the country's self-reliance. But there are pitfalls here. The manipulation of debt by the International Monetary Fund is one thing: support for grassroots development initiatives, or criticism of human-rights abuses, is quite another.

So, with minimal development of open civil society or real democracy, nationalism remains the only value, the only glue to hold things together. Add to this a military ethos and command culture inherited from the wars of liberation and you can see where we are going. A military viewpoint has its *raison d'être* in 'enemies' – and the Horn of Africa has always had plenty of those. It is a region where one must walk on eggshells to avoid conflict, so making a few square kilometres of rocky desert the pretext for full-scale mobilization and a lot more death is pretty easy. It probably isn't even consciously cynical – that this is good for domestic consumption – it's just always been that way.

But if there is to be any hope of lasting peace and the co-operation that is so necessary to shield people and allow survival in the arid fragility of one of the most precarious environments on earth – both Tigray and Eritrea qualify here – and give them some sense of security, it must come from the co-operation and democratization of both societies. As long as the leadership sees social and political development as simply carrying on the war by other means, this can never occur. The old leaderships of the liberation struggle must loosen their grip on power and let their societies breathe the freedom they fought so hard to attain. Only then will nation-building be more than a matter of keeping the enemy at bay. ■

Richard Swift is a Co-Editor of the *New Internationalist*, based in Toronto.



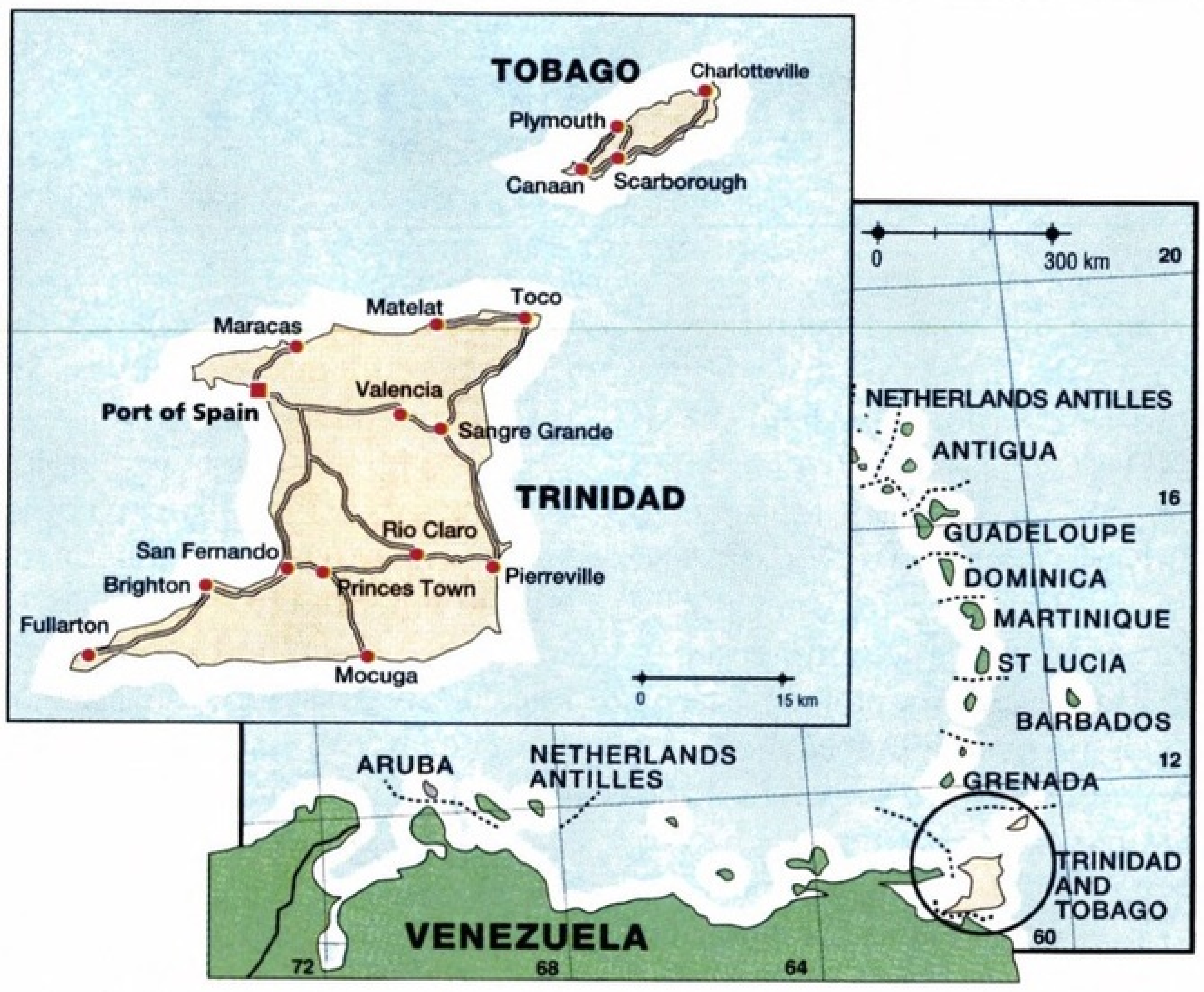
More political space needed on the streets of Addis Ababa.

RHODRI JONES / PANOS PICTURES

Country profile

Trinidad & Tobago

THE road out of central Port of Spain towards Tunapuna is more Bombay or Calcutta than typical Caribbean. The stores display brightly coloured saris and the latest 'Bollywood' videos, while Indian music blares out alongside soca from passing buses. The sprawling eastern suburbs of Trinidad's capital are one of the island's Indian heartlands, but the sub-continent has also been transplanted into the countryside. Hindu prayer flags stand among clumps of banana or coconut trees.



ITEM WORLD GUIDE 1996/97

Indo-Trinidadians make up about 40 per cent of the island's population. They are descended from the 140,000 indentured labourers who crossed the 'black waters' from India between 1845 and 1917 to work on the sugar plantations. From the start, they encountered hostility from the black population, who blamed the 'coolies' for driving down agricultural wages. Suspicion and a cultural divide persisted into modern times. In the years following independence, the primarily black People's National Movement (PNM) dominated Trinidad's politics, monopolizing public-sector jobs for its supporters.

In November 1995, Indo-Trinidad took a significant step forward when the United National Congress (UNC) won elections, putting Basdeo Panday into power as the country's first Indian-descended Prime Minister. There are hopeful signs that the ethnic tensions may be on the wane. Parties are now less rigidly divided along racial lines, and Panday has been careful to nominate multi-ethnic cabinets. More symbolically, recent carnivals, long the preserve of Afro-Trinidadian steelbands and calypso singers, have witnessed the growing popularity of Indian-influenced music such as 'chutney'.

Unlike the smaller, quieter sister island of Tobago, Trinidad is primarily urban and industrial. Its most famous author, VS Naipaul, lamented in the 1960s that Port of Spain was 'the noisiest city in the world', but this was before the oil boom of the mid-1970s which fuelled urban growth and lavish consumer spending. Oil had been exported from Trinidad since the beginning of the century, but the island had never experienced a bonanza to match 1973-80. As Government revenue quadrupled and average income skyrocketed, Trinidad's rich enjoyed a seven-year 'fete' of imported cars and whisky. The PNM Government invested a fortune in heavy industry, but much was also squandered or pilfered.

By 1981 the party was over, and an extended recession brought Trinidad back to earth. Extensive foreign debt and low oil prices meant that 1994 was the first year of real economic growth since the good days of the boom. Yet the island still remains critically dependent on crude and refined petroleum exports and vulnerable to world price fluctuations.

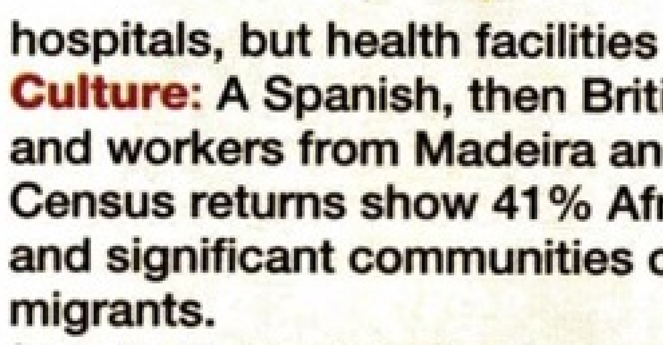
Natural gas, extracted from offshore fields, is becoming increasingly important, and the government-built plants of the late 1970s produce iron and steel, petrochemicals and electronic parts.

This industrial base makes Trinidad the exception among the mostly agricultural islands of the Eastern Caribbean. Living standards are still higher and infrastructure – when not clogged by spectacular traffic jams – more developed. But farming has suffered, and Trinidad – less so Tobago – imports much of its food.

Whether the country's relative prosperity remains intact is largely in the hands of commodity markets. Few, however, expect a return to the 1970s, when calypsonian Mighty Sparrow sang that; 'in Trinidad we see capitalism gone mad'. ■

James Ferguson

AT A GLANCE


GUY MANSFIELD / PANOS PICTURES

Leader: Prime Minister Basdeo Panday.

Economy: GNP per capita $3,986 (UK $18,080).

Monetary unit: Trinidad and Tobago dollar TT$5.88 = $1.00

Main exports: Petroleum, gas, petrochemicals.

Main imports: Foodstuffs, capital goods, consumer goods. Tourism is important to Tobago and is being encouraged in Trinidad.

People: 1.3 million

Health: Infant mortality 15 per 1,000 live births (Canada 6 per 1,000). Trinidad boasts one of the Caribbean's state-of-the-art hospitals, but health facilities are poor outside the major towns.

Culture: A Spanish, then British, colony, Trinidad imported African slaves and workers from Madeira and Portugal as well as Indian labourers. Census returns show 41% African-descended, 40% Indian-descended and significant communities of Europeans, Chinese and Middle Eastern migrants.

Language: English (official), Hindi, Urdu, French, Spanish.

Religion: 60% Christian (majority Roman Catholic); 25% Hindu; 6% Muslim.

Sources: *Human Development Report 1997*, UNDP, *Caribbean Insight*, Economist Intelligence Unit, Inter-American Development Bank, *The State of the World's Children 1998*, UNICEF.

Previously profiled May 1990

NI star rating

EXCELLENT	★★★★★
GOOD	★★★★
FAIR	★★★
POOR	★★
APPALLING	★

STAR RATINGS

INCOME DISTRIBUTION ★★
The beneficiaries of the boom were the rich. Stark inequalities persist between urban slums and leafy suburbs, town and village. Unemployment is around 20%.
1990 ★★★

SELF-RELIANCE ★★★
Despite dependence on oil Trinidad has built up a diversified industrial base. Food security remains a problem.
1990 ★★★

POSITION OF WOMEN ★★★★
Opportunities are fairly distributed, although the oil industry and politics are still male-dominated.
1990 ★★★★

LITERACY ★★★★★
Official literacy rate is 97.9%, the result of steady Government investment.
1990 ★★★★★

FREEDOM ★★★★
A lively press and long tradition of outspoken political commentary exist, but there are some concerns about corruption and inefficiency in the judicial and prison systems.
1990 ★★★★★

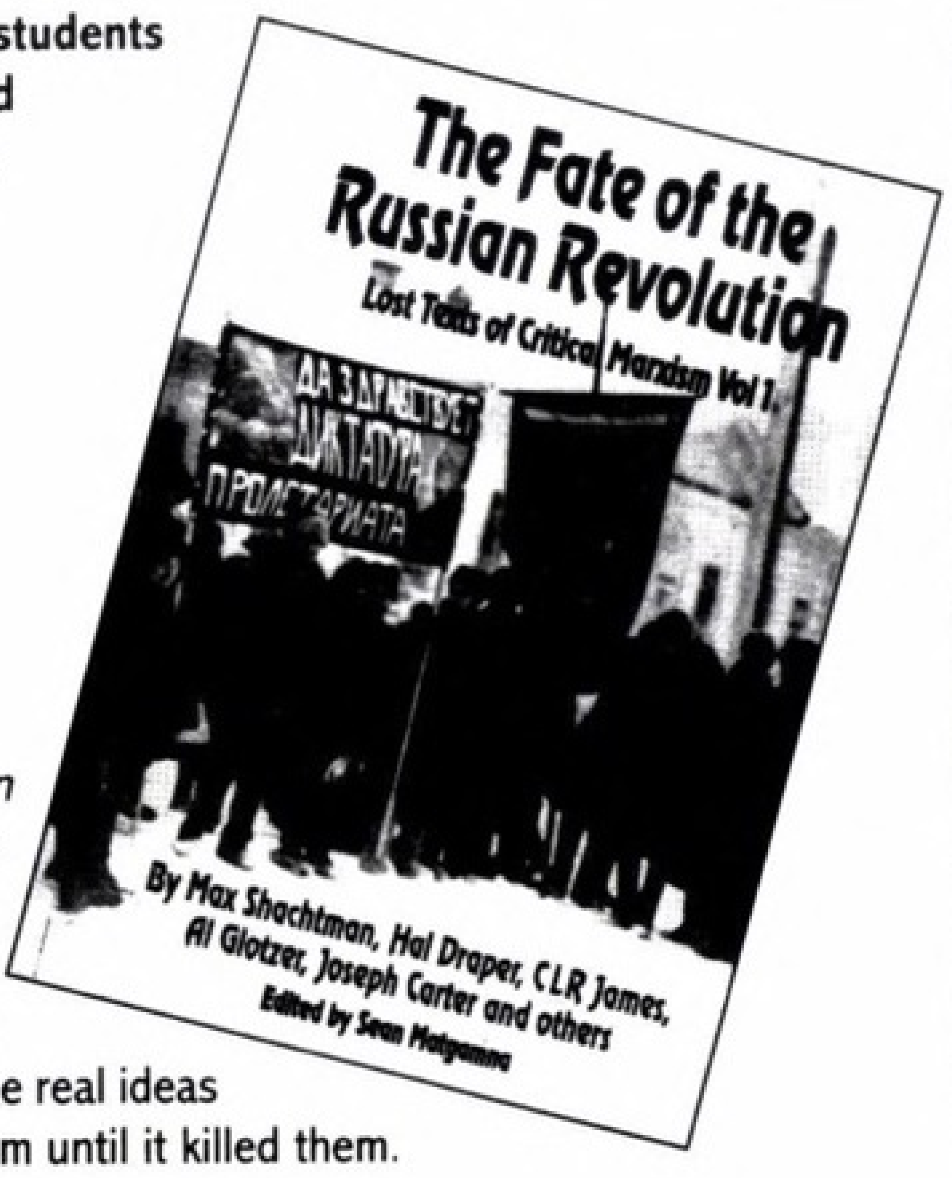
LIFE EXPECTANCY ★★★★
72 years and rising due to improving health care facilities.
1990 ★★★★

POLITICS

NI ASSESSMENT ★★
Recent changes in government have yet to confirm the demise of racialized politics, but Trinidad's democracy has successfully weathered two abortive coup attempts in the last 30 years. Relations with Tobago, however, are traditionally tense and the threat of secession emerges at regular intervals.

Lost Texts of Critical Marxism

The Fate of the Russian Revolution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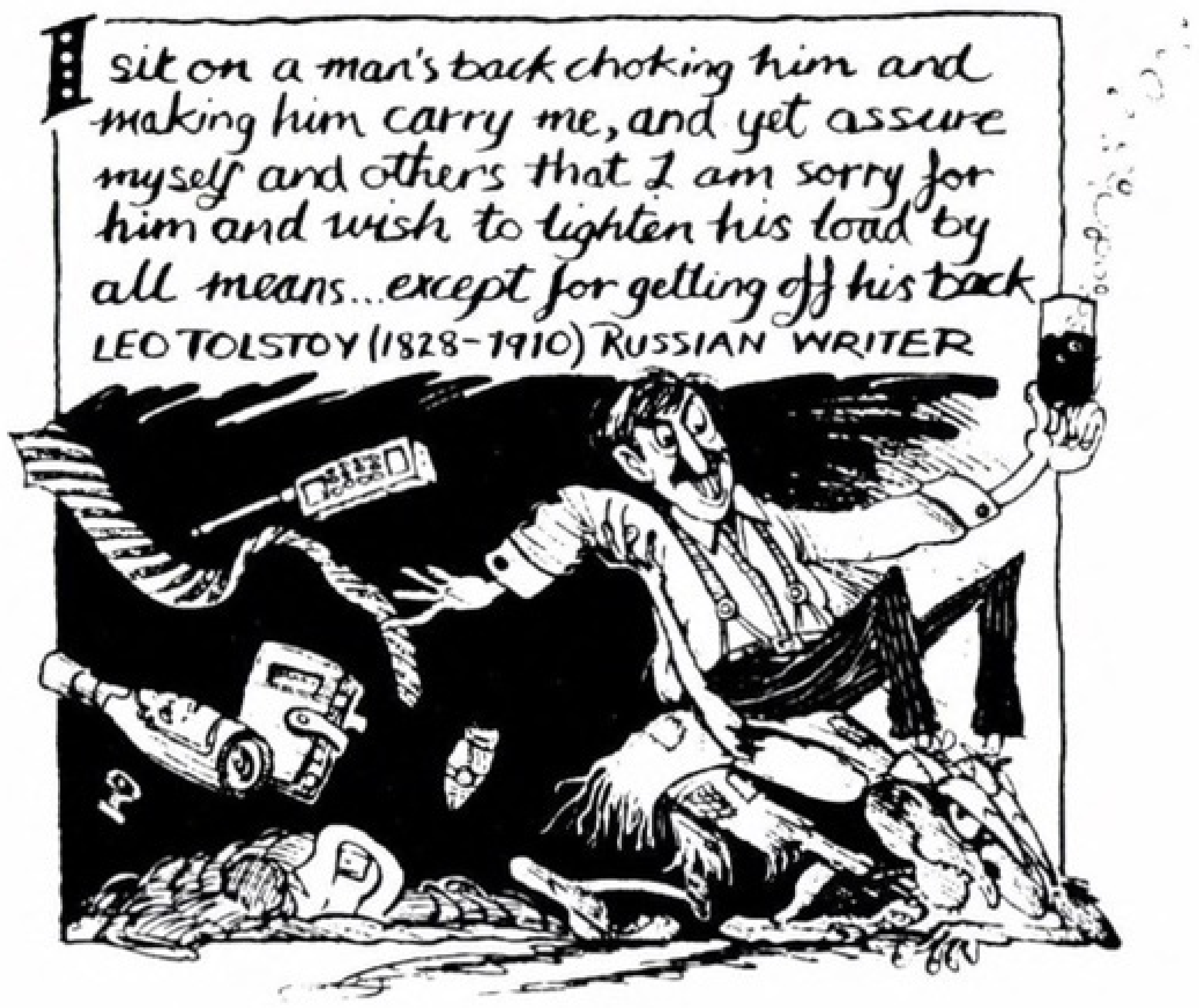
I sit on a man's back choking him and making him carry me, and yet assure myself and others that I am sorry for him and wish to lighten his load by all means... except for getting off his back
LEO TOLSTOY (1828-1910) RUSSIAN WRITER

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